The Present Capitalist "Boom" — JOHN STRAC

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Poland's City of Little Tailors

By JOHN L. SPIVAK

Martial Law Grips Indiana

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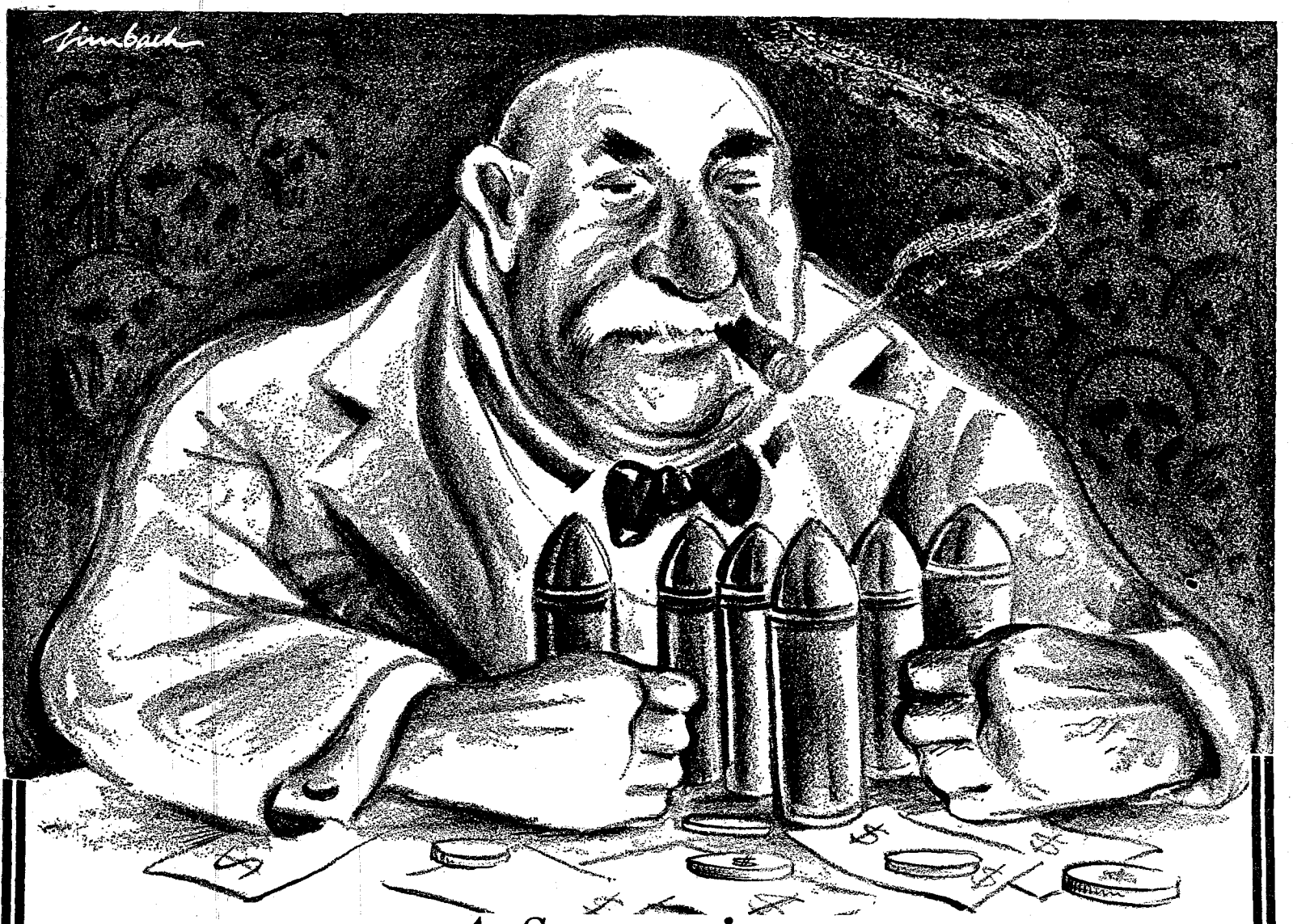

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New Masses

FEBRUARY 11, 1936

Who Will Pay?

WHILE it was pouring out billions in loans and subsidies to bankers, industrialists and armament-makers, the Roosevelt administration was proceeding on the premise that future generations would pay the bills. But the day of financial reckoning has come—and a good deal earlier than anticipated. With the scrapping of the A.A.A. processing taxes and the passage of the bonus bill, the Roosevelt administration now faces the emergency of raising huge funds at once. How is this to be accomplished? Roosevelt announces that he will probably ask for new taxes, but the inflationary bloc in Congress has a different view of the situation. Those who advocate increased taxes are following the lead of the large bankers and industrialists who have long been howling: cut out relief, increase taxes and the budget will be balanced! The great monopolies declare that the administration went far enough toward inflation when it devalued the dollar by 41 percent; and although most of them have been hedging against future inflation by investing in commodities and other tangible values, they are not in favor of further inflation at this moment. They are chiefly concerned with transferring the cost of the New Deal and the bonus to the working people—an excellent precedent and one which would help to pave the way for their professed scheme: a national sales tax which would actually clamp the entire debt burden on the shoulders of the consumers.

THE inflationary forces, however, hope to capitalize on the present popular resentment against further taxation. Comprising mainly speculators in commodities and certain manufacturers grouped around the arch-reactionary Committee for the Nation, these people would benefit heavily from an inflationary rise in prices. With Father Coughlin as their mouthpiece, they are prepared to ballyhoo the issuance of paper money as the one-and-only means of avoiding new government debts.

"Experimenting for the perfect Aryan may be all right in its way, **Herr Doktor**, but there are times when I wish we had stuck to plain surgery."

THE overwhelming numbers of citizens, however, would suffer no matter which of these two programs was fulfilled. Under inflation, the purchasing power of the dollar would be reduced by the consequent skyrocketing of prices. Every worker's dollar would obtain proportionately less food, clothing and other bare necessities. Every person with a small fixed income would likewise suffer. Wages and salaries, of course, could never keep up with the speedy rise in living costs. And the farmers would suffer from shrinking markets because they would be compelled to cut down on their purchases. The war veterans, after waiting for years to get the bonus, would find that they have been sold a gold brick, as the value of their certificates would diminish with the depreciation of the dollar. If the tax program goes into effect, the vast majority of Americans will find themselves even more strapped than they are now. Today they carry two-thirds of the federal-tax load, while the wealthy pay only a third. Last year the gigantic sum of $2,300,000,000 was paid out merely in *interest charges* on federal, state and municipal debts. This money went into the pockets of the very capitalists who had received the billions that ran up the present great national and local debt: they took money from the R.F.C. and loaned it back to the government a

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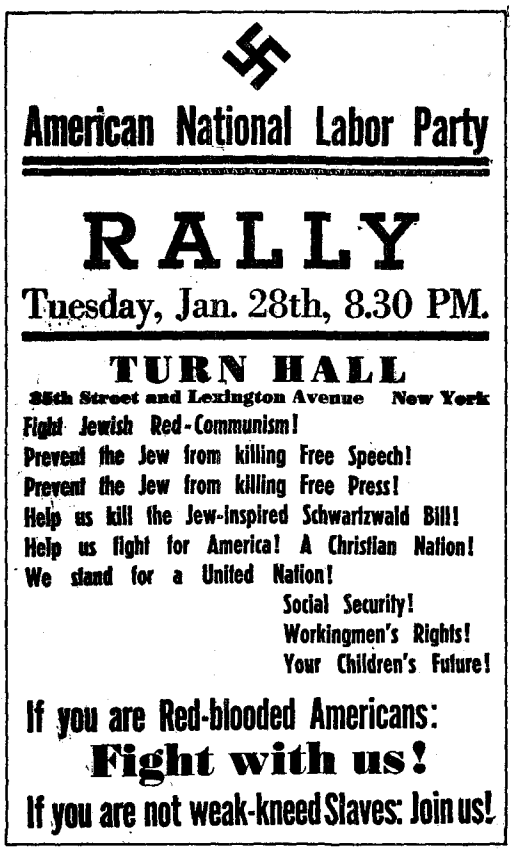
juicy interest rates. They ate their cake and now they ask the people to pay for it.

BUT there is a perfectly sound way of balancing the budget and one which does not require cheapening the dollar or paying more extortion money to the bankers. Make the rich pay the costs of the crisis and of necessary social legislation. General Motors reported a profit of $167,000,000 for 1935. And 418 corporations—*less than one-tenth of one percent* of all corporations—made an estimated profit of well over one billion dollars last year. Out of these sums, out of the salaries in six figures received by Hearst, Sloan and others, out of the billions in corporate surpluses, out of the big fortunes and estates, there can be found more than sufficient tax revenue to take care of the unemployed, the veterans, the farmers and of the immediate needs of the American people.

The Miners' Decisions

ASSEMBLED in Washington since early last week, the 1,700 delegates representing 540,000 miners have faced three main problems in the convention of the United Mine Workers of America. First and most important: industrial vs. craft unions; secondly, political endorsement; thirdly, district autonomy. John L. Lewis, the union's chief, has repeatedly attacked both the craft form of organization, and its firmest advocate, William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor. Lewis, who initiated the organization of the Committee for Industrial Organization sponsored by eight leading unions, believes that the blanket endorsement of this type of unionism will lead millions of unorganized workers in the mass-production industries into the A. F. of L. Green, finally appearing before the convention, begged for compromise. His statements that we are "one family with different economic and social views" and that we have "an obligation to carry out the decisions of the convention of the American Federation of Labor" from which body alone he takes his "instructions" were roundly booed. Undoubtedly before long there will be a showdown.

WHILE it has placed itself on record as opposed to the Tydings-McCormack military disaffection bill, the Kramer-Russell sedition bill and the Dies deportation bill, and in favor of the freedom of political prisoners, the Convention has failed to note that its arch-hero, President Roosevelt, has been utterly silent on all of these issues. Indeed, it has given unqualified endorsement to the re-election of President Roosevelt, while attacking Al Smith and urging curtailment of the powers of the Supreme Court. A score of resolutions favoring a Farmer-Labor Party were passed up as "impractical at this time." The organized miners, at a high with almost 95 percent of the industry in their union and with over two million dollars in the treasury, do not yet understand what the workers of France now take for granted: namely, the definite and open tie-up of the trade-unions with the working-class political parties. Nor have they as yet established within their own organization the system of district autonomy—a prerequisite to democratic procedure as well as an essential if the U.M.W.A. is to fulfill its function as a social, economic and political force of national importance.


American National Labor Party
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Tuesday, Jan. 28th, 8.30 PM.
TURN HALL
85th Street and Lexington Avenue New York
Fight Jewish Red-Communism!
Prevent the Jew from killing Free Speech!
Prevent the Jew from killing Free Press!
Help us kill the Jew-inspired Schwartzwald Bill!
Help us fight for America! A Christian Nation!
We stand for a United Nation!
Social Security!
Workingmen's Rights!
Your Children's Future!
If you are Red-blooded Americans:
Fight with us!
If you are not weak-kneed Slaves: Join us!

Reproduction of a handbill circulated by a New York anti-semitic political organization

Italy's Army in the Mud

FOUR months ago the Italian troops crossed the Mareb River and invaded Ethiopia. To date they have failed to make any real headway on the northern front. The peak of their line—Makale, is now surrounded on three sides by swift-moving bands of Ethiopians who have been inflicting heavy punishment on the Italian forces in the Tembien region. In the south, for all the publicity with which the Italians have surrounded their "hell on wheels" column which made the advance to Noghelli, they have not even reached the mountain country where the Ethiopian command intends to make a stand. Now the "little rains" which last for six weeks are around the corner. And in some three months the big rains will start and then the Italian armies will be stranded in a sea of mud hundreds of miles from their main bases in Eritrea and Somaliland. Their prospects are rather gloomy, unless they can lure the Ethiopians into making suicidal mass attacks or unless they can inflict one or two morale-breaking defeats. This does not seem very likely. The Ethiopians have made clever use of their superior mobility and the natural advantages of their terrain. They have concentrated on hammering the Italian lines of communications, on surprise raids and night attacks on advance positions. Even the Italian communiques are now beginning to report defeats and numerous casualties. And Mussolini himself has finally admitted that the war will go into a second year, thus reneging on the brazen fascist boast of a complete victory in three months.

THIS leaves the Italian regime in a very tight spot. How will it with its gold reserves on the verge of exhaustion, finance another year's warfare in the face of working-class actions, partial sanctions (though exports to Italy from Germany and the United States increase) and the high prices they must pay for raw materials? Already there is grumbling at home and mutinies have occurred among troops sailing for Africa. The armies in Africa are faced with internal dissension—there is the hatred of the conscript troops for the black-shirt regiments that act as military police. There are latent explosions brewing which will become all the more dangerous as the troops are mired for months in the Ethiopian mud and face the constant dangers of disease, surprise attacks, short rations, etc. The Ethiopian people by their courageous resistance to the invasion of Mussolini have become front-line fighters against fascism.

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Fighting the Teachers

DR. FREDERICK OSWALD, principal of Eastern District High School in Brooklyn, does not like the Teachers' Union. And as a result, members of the union suddenly discover that their work is "unsatisfactory." A probationary instructor who was also secretary of the school's local unit, received such a rating though her work had been previously cited as excellent by other principals. Another "strong" teacher was marked "weak." Nor does Dr. Oswald stop here. Union announcements are banned from the school bulletin board, union teas cannot be given in the lunchroom, though other organizations were granted both privileges. The Teachers' Union has appealed to the Board of Education for a re-evaluation of union teachers' records and is holding a mass meeting on February 14 to discuss the abuse of the rating system.

STUDENTS too are subjected to pressure by reactionary principals who tacitly support intimidation and suppression. At James Monroe High School in Brooklyn, a group who call themselves the "Monroe Vigilantes" posted a notice on the lunchroom bulletin board which read in part: "the Vigilantes constitute a group of once passive members of the student body who have taken upon themselves special powers for enforcing the proper discipline through a process of supportable intimidations." The Teachers' Union has written Dr. Henry Hein, principal of the school, to ask by whose permission such an announcement was allowed to appear. Dr. Hein has not replied.

The "Plan-less" Jewish Plan

THERE is no doubt that despite repeated denials, the three wealthy Englishmen, Sir Herbert Samuel, Simon Marks and Lord Bearsted, were at least flirting with a plan of ransoming Jews from Germany by breaking the economic boycott. The plan as first outlined by The New York Times and which received the eager endorsement of Nazi officials would have financed the removal of German-Jewish capitalists and saved a greater part of their fortunes. The Jews would have "loaned" their capital to German corporations; the plan called for the repayment of 65 percent of the loan (the other 35 percent was to be clear profit for the corporations) over a ten-year period, beginning four years from the date the loan was made. Of course, the chances of collecting even 65 percent of the loaned property is based on the prosperity of Germany: such rescued capitalists with their fortunes at stake, might be expected to become ardent salesmen of German goods. They could expect — at least so the banker Felix Warburg stated — positions where those "who have been employers, should once more become work givers and employers elsewhere." And in such positions, these Jews with financial equity in the Nazi state would be in a favored place to press trade with the Reich.

THE plan did not fall through because rich Jews did not approve or because the Hitler government was not willing to give it a trial. It did not fall through because it might have resulted in increased persecution and pogroms in Poland, Hungary, Rumania and other countries where fascist governments would be only too willing to get rid of surplus Jews—particularly when they can do so at a profit. It fell through only because mass indignation throughout the world, and especially in America and England, was so spontaneous and unanimous that the wealthy philanthropists realized that they would not only face the opprobrium of all working-class, anti-fascist and liberal groups, but that they would be unable to raise the proposed $15,000,000.

SINCE the resentment has shown itself so powerfully, the English commission and their American supporters have protested a little too volubly their innocence of ever having conceived such a plan. Now they are launching a campaign for a vast sum of money without announcing any plan —except that they will help some 100,000 to 250,000 Jewish youths to make their way in Palestine or some other country. That the British government will agree to such a mass immigration in Palestine is by no means certain; where else such refugees could be settled is questionable. It is not overcautious to be suspicious of a commission backed by the very wealthiest Jewish capitalists, to say nothing of the fact that the immigration of this number of German Jews is by no stretch of the imagination a solution of the German Jewish problem. If wealthy Jews were really anxious to fight Hitlerism, to fight the fascist cause of anti-semitism, they could use the $15,000,000 to strengthen the boycott on German goods and to fight the true cause of oppression, torture, murder in the Third Reich.

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Editor: MICHAEL GOLD; *Associate Editors:* GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, RUSSELL T. LIMBACH, LOREN MILLER, BRUCE MINTON.

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The Present Capitalist "Boom"

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, Feb. 2.

I HAVE received a number of letters from readers of these articles on the question of the present economic situation. Hence I should like to devote my share this week to an account of the present economic situation and future prospects as they look to us in Britain. Here is a letter which puts a point which seems to be worrying a number of people.

> I would welcome a reply to the following question. In 1929 with the commencement of the great slump, the Communist explanation of its causes was the only acceptable one. The Marxists went further and showed in a reasonable and logical way that this was the *final* crisis. Yet today we find production returning to the 1928 level. Admittedly unemployment remains as pronounced as ever and also that much of this activity is in preparation for war, the capitalist way out of the crisis. Nevertheless, the layman may be inclined to think that capitalism has again confounded the critics. Perhaps John Strachey or others might explain.

I do not know which Marxist writers are referred to as saying that there would be no recovery from the slump. In these matters one had perhaps better speak for oneself.

I certainly never suggested that the economic crisis which began in 1929 was the final crisis of capitalism in the sense that there would be no further periods of relative recovery. Here is what I wrote in a book called *The Coming Struggle for Power*, which was published in 1932, that is to say, at the very bottom of the slump:

"It is quite possible that the present conditions of acute crisis will pass. Let us suppose for a moment that the best hopes of the capitalist world are realized and that the present crisis is overcome. Even in that event it seems most unlikely that any boom comparable in magnitude, duration or stability to the period 1924-1929 will recur. The 1924-1929 boom itself was far less general, secure and vigorous than were the great pre-war booms of the heyday of capitalism. In fact, in Great Britain, it was considered to be merely the mitigation of permanent depression.

"In the same way, it seems clear from the amount of permanent and irreparable damage that this slump has already done to world capitalism, from the extent to which it has forced all the great states to disrupt the world free market and from the degree to which it has sharpened imperialist antagonisms that the next boom period, if it comes, will be comparatively short, patchy, hectic and unstable. And not only will future booms, if any, be patchy as between country and country; they will be patchy as between industry and industry in the same country. In general then we may say that while there may be further periods of capitalist boom, they will have the characteristics which the philosopher Hobbes attributed to the life of primitive man. They will be nasty, brutish and short."

I am bound to say that after four years this forecast seems to me to stand up fairly well. A period of marked recovery has occurred in certain capitalist countries; for example, Great Britain, and now also in America. But even in these countries it hardly amounts, as yet at any rate, to true boom conditions. On the other hand, there are other parts of the capitalist world, for example, France, Switzerland and Holland, which have shared hardly at all in this recovery. This upward movement of the trade cycle as compared at any rate with the upward movement of the 1920's has in fact been extremely patchy both between country and country and industry and industry. Moreover, imperialist antagonisms have clearly become far more acute.

There is a sense, however, in which Marxist writers do talk about the existing situation as representing a final crisis of capitalism. But in this case they are not talking about the familiar seesaw of boom and slump. They are referring to the fact that, dating from 1914, capitalism as a worldwide system and taken as a whole began to enter a period of permanent and irrevocable crisis. If you look at the figures of world trade and world production you will find that up till 1914 they represent a zigzag, but taken as a whole, ascending line. Booms and slumps succeed each other pretty regularly, that is to say. But each boom takes world trade and production higher than the preceding one and each slump fails to reduce them to as low a point as the preceding slump.

From 1914 onwards, however, the opposite is true. The zigzag line continues, but now taken as a whole it is a descending line. Each slump, that is to say, takes the figures of world trade and production lower than the preceding one and each boom fails to raise them so high as the preceding boom.

(I have made the picture look a little clearer and simpler than it really is. There are several conflicting factors. For example, we have to take into consideration the rapid increase in world population so that even if a particular recovery takes the figures back to the same level as that reached in the previous boom, there is still a decrease in trade and production per capita. But the above is the general picture.)

Now capitalism must expand or die. Hence Marxists, noting that since 1914 it has evidently failed to expand and has probably actually contracted, say that it has entered a period of permanent crisis. Nor as a matter of fact are Marxist economists alone in this view. The best capitalist economists admit that this is the case. For example, the ultra-orthodox capitalist economist, Professor Robbins of London University, stated in his recent book, *The Great Depression*, published in 1934, that "We live not in the fifth but in the nineteenth year of the world crisis." I do not think that Marxist writers always make it quite clear whether they are talking about this permanent general crisis of capitalism which has gone on since 1914 or about the cyclical crises. (As a matter of fact, a failure adequately to distinguish between these two things is a defect of my book, *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis*.)

I am also inclined to think that Marxist writers have tended to exaggerate the effect of rearmament as a basis of the present upward movement. I am inclined to attach more importance to the workings of the ordinary economic factors which as Marx described in Vol. III of *Capital* always will, given time and opportunity, produce recovery from the depths of a depression. But again, as Marx showed with incomparable clarity and subtlety, these economic factors only bring recovery by laying down the basis of a new crisis. Hence it seems to me to be certain that some time between now and 1940 we shall experience the outbreak of a new economic crisis. But exactly when it will come or in which country and in what form it will first appear are very much more doubtful questions.

From the point of view of economic theory there are reasons for supposing that the new crisis will break out in that country which is experiencing the greatest degree of recovery. This is what happened in the 1930's. Today Britain is experiencing the greatest degree of recovery. Hence the new crisis might on these grounds be expected to break out here. But it would be most rash to prophesy definitely that it would. For today the political situation of the world is so unstable that purely economic considerations are almost certain to be offset and overridden. It may even be that the outbreak of a large-scale war will prevent the coming of a new economic crisis in the ordinary form. This is what happened in 1914 when a crisis was just beginning in America. But a war does not solve the problems of capitalism. On the contrary, it only postpones slump by creating conditions which lead more rapidly than any other to the destruction of capitalism.

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"IT'S AN ILL WIND..."

Russell T. Limbach

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"Forget the Rich"

HAROLD WARD

THREE recent events have brought into sharp focus the double-edged problems of the middle classes in the United States. "Double-edged" because it concerns both their economic survival under the swiftly maturing fascist trends in this country and their political alignment in the fierce struggles for the preservation—and extension—of democratic liberties.

The first was the Silver Jubilee Convention of the National Retail Dry Goods Association, held in New York City toward the end of January. Here, with the august blessings of Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, a group of "big-time" retail merchants outlined plans designed to enlist thousands of small shopkeepers and enterprisers in a campaign for lower prices, better distribution, opposition to chain-stores, against competitive taxation and excessive government "interference" with their affairs, including the suppression of information on all salaries above $15,000 a year. Note that last point—and then bear in mind this fact: in 1929, when prosperity was still supposed to be an eternal truth of American life, more than half of the country's storekeepers realized an annual business of only $12,000 and one-third managed to get away with $5,000, or less. Question: just what group would profit from the realization of the above program which you, the "little fellow," are asked to support in the name of sound business?

Second event: The recent organization, under the leadership of Edward A. Filene, one of the country's shrewdest and most powerful retail magnates, of the million-dollar Consumer Distribution Corporation, "to serve" (quoting from The New York Times) "as the central buying and service unit for a large chain of cooperative department stores and other types of retail business." President and sole stockholder, Edward A. Filene. Question: just what is going to happen to the two million—more or less—small shopkeepers and traders when, as and if this retail colossus gets under way? Remember that since 1929 some 500,000 independent small storekeepers have been wiped out, "rubbed out," as the gangsters say—and very largely because of the growth of just such chain-stores as Filene has in mind. Does it become more clear that Big Business, with the aid of powerful banking and industrial interests, is offering "salvation" to the middle classes—at the point of a gun?

Third event: That amiable demagogue, Ex-Governor Alfred E. Smith, went completely wild during his speech at the Liberty League banquet held in Washington on the evening of January 25. Before a picked assembly of the country's most notorious reactionaries, virtually the whole Du Pont clan, with incredible fatuity and political tactlessness, this popular champion of the little fellow declared:

> Forget the rich. They can't pay this debt. There is no use talking about the poor. *This debt is going to be paid by that great big middle class that we refer to as the backbone and the rank and file.* It will come to them in the cost of living. **[Emphasis mine.—H. W.]**

So thought Mussolini and Hitler—but they had the sagacity not to say it—and their financial backers, the representatives of the big bourgeoisie, had the sense to keep out of the picture—at least until the fascist regime was firmly clamped down on the backs of the workers. After which it was easy to whip the middle classes into subjection.

Al Smith, frank simpleton that he is, spilled the beans: his phrase, "Forget the rich," should be echoed in derision from every slum, tenement, factory, workshop, picket line, farm, barracks and jail throughout the length and breadth of the land—until "that great big middle class" has fully learned the lesson of solidarity with the American and international proletariat in its struggle for basic economic rights and political liberties.

IT IS probable that in no other sector of American life is the problem of a correct political line-up more difficult—and more urgent—than among the middle classes. Especially in that sub-group which includes small retailers, independent shopkeepers and enterprisers in the various fields of industry and commerce. Lewis Corey, from whom I have already quoted some figures relative to this group, has punctured many of the "exceptionalist" illusions which, by fostering a dangerous pride, play directly into the hands of the big ruling bourgeoisie. He has shown that in 1930, of the 12,500,000 people who could be designated as "middle class" (including professional people, technicians, minor officials, clerical and public-service employes, salesmen, etc.), only 26 percent were "independent enterprisers," getting their living from small concerns operated on a profit basis.

Of the total gainfully employed these last represented less than 7 percent: and in the two years, 1931-32, their numbers were reduced by nearly 400,000—which means that today, out of the severely reduced total of those employed, not more than five in every hundred are realizing anything from the great American tradition of "business as usual." According to recent findings published by Labor Research Association, unemployment in the wholesale and retail trade fields alone was 875,000 in November of last year, to which may be added another huge block of 859,000 unemployed professionals. Can anyone doubt that by far the greater part of those in the first category come from just those groups of so-called "independents" who have been shoved ruthlessly to the wall by the rapid concentration of wealth, centralization of trade and industry, rationalization—and the alarming growth of chain stores in every field, from the "five-and-ten" to the Morgan-controlled Montgomery Ward—a mail-order house with a chain-store market; Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea, United Cigar Stores and so on.

In 1929, 75 percent of the retail-trade business fell into the coffers of 25 percent of the establishments, while 60 percent of all corporate net income went to swell the profits of less than .3 percent of all registered corporations. One result of this inevitable trend toward the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands is the steady forcing of the "independents"—together with all other formerly "privileged" middle-class people—into the ranks of the proletariat: economically, if not yet with political consciousness.

The small retailer, shopkeeper and proprietor, faced with the prospect of hopeless competition against the very giant corporations which are now pleading for his support in a "common" interest, must do one or more of four things:

1: Fight a losing individual battle against extinction by the powerful Trust.

2: Sell out quickly for what he can get, with the strong possibility of eventual desti-

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tution through exhaustion of savings and diminished opportunities for employment.

3: Accept a minor or "executive" position from the boss-Corporation, at whatever salary or wage he can get and with no guarantee whatever against cuts, exploitation or the loss of his job.

4: Unite, with all other members of his group on the basis of the broadest possible economic and political program directed against all aggressions of finance capital and eventually, with all workers, professional people, small farmers and the exploited in every field, join in one massive People's Front to block the growth of reaction, to *prevent* fascism and imperialist war.

The petty-bourgeois groups are caught between the anvil of reaction and the hammer of revolution. Either way they turn they are confronted by one supreme challenge: the challenge to organize. Behind them is the powerful state apparatus of the ruling class, organized to the least detail for "the invisible event" of fascism. That is one world: the world of decay, terror and a bestial hatred of all human ideals. In front of them, organized on the basis of a disciplined and unrelenting class struggle against all exploitation of man by man, are the revolutionary forces of the workers. That is the other world: the world of Socialism. . . .

The middle classes *cannot* organize independently for a "third world." Eventually, they must throw their strength and allegiance on one or the other scale of the balance. For the big bourgeoisie and for the politically mature proletariat, the choice has been made. For those still between it is now and unequivocally, "Either—or?"

Poland's City of Little Tailors

JOHN L. SPIVAK

PARIS.

I WAS the guest of a banker in Warsaw and he told me of the misery and hunger of the Polish people.

"It is simply incredible how they live," he said, helping himself to another glass of rare wine. "You should see the industrial workers as well as the peasants to understand how poverty stricken we are."

He drank the wine and shook his head sadly. The banker really felt sorry for the people but other than trying to keep the zloty (unit of exchange) stable and contribute good-sized sums to charity to relieve the distress, he had no idea of what to do about it.

"How do the industrial workers live?"

"Terribly. You should visit Brzeziny." He shuddered at the thought of that city.

"But I don't want to see unusually bad conditions. I want to see the average. Are the conditions there fairly representative?"

He thought about it carefully and finally nodded his head.

"Yes—for that type of worker. The city itself is peculiar because the entire population lives by sewing trousers and vests and coats. It's a city of little tailors. They make cheap clothes for export abroad, especially to England, which in turn sells them to her colonies. When you see Brzeziny you will have an idea of how the Polish industrial worker lives."

I went to Lodz where so many middle men who supply the cloth to the little tailors of Brzeziny have their factories. There I was the guest of a rich pants-manufacturer. Sitting at his table laden with fruits and cakes and tea, he sighed, "You must go to Brzeziny. There you will get an idea of how Polish industrial workers live."

The pants-manufacturer was a kindly man and his sigh was real. I had heard of his charity contributions, of how really heartsick he was at the extreme poverty all about him.

"They are very poor?" I asked.

"Terribly poor," he said, pouring more tea for me into an exquisite cup.

"Do the middle men who distribute the cloth among these tailors make any money?"

"Naturally." He smiled understandingly. "When I give work to many families I make a profit from each one—"

"Yet you feel terribly sorry for them?"

"I do," he said and I believed him. "But what shall I do?" he asked rather helplessly. "If, touched by their extreme poverty, I pay them more I will not be able to compete with other manufacturers. If I let softness get into my business, I will go bankrupt."

"You had a strike of your workers—" I began.

"That is true; and with the help of the police I broke it. What else could I do if I want to stay in business? I fought for my business just as these workers fought for their livelihood. I felt sorry for them; I wish I could have done something, but I couldn't without reducing my profits or going bankrupt. And if I start reducing my profits and follow it through logically I might as well divide up everything I have and join them and let someone else exploit me as I exploit them; and that would not help the workers much and it certainly wouldn't help me."

"But you are so touched by their poverty. What can be done about it?"

He shook his head slowly. "The only answer is to change the whole economic system and I am opposed to that because it is to my interest to keep this system," he said frankly.

"Then you are willing to keep these tailors in the poverty you describe so that you can live well?"

"I am not willing," he said with feeling, "but it is poverty for them or poverty for me, and if it comes to a choice I prefer poverty for them. But you really should go there and see for yourself."

Brzeziny is less than an hour's drive from Lodz and the ancient, rattling taxi threatened to fall apart as it bumped along the rutted frozen road. Occasionally a bony nag pulling a long wooden wagon with a scarecrow sitting on the driver's seat passed us. You tried to see the scarecrow's face but it was too bundled up in protection from the bitter cold; and occasionally a man or a woman hurried by on the road, carrying something in his arms.

"What are they carrying?" I asked the driver.

"A little wood," he said. "They find little sticks in the fields sometimes and they can build a fire to keep themselves warm."

And then we came to Brzeziny.

ROWS upon rows of houses stretched along the twisting main street, houses of wood and houses of brick, some with wooden roofs and some with straw-thatched roofs, one-story houses and two-story houses and three-story houses with rooms portioned out to get the most rent out of the 17,000 human beings who live there.

I walked along its cobbled streets and narrow, broken sidewalks with an odd feeling that there was something familiar about the place, that I had seen it somewhere before and then suddenly it came upon me in a flash: it was a dead city. There was no one to be seen. It was just a city of cobbled streets, sagging buildings, broken walls, cracked sidewalks and silence.

I turned a corner and saw the figure of a woman issue from a doorway. Her hips bulged from the many petticoats she wore to keep warm and her head was covered with a great shawl. I hurried towards her, but she vanished into a courtyard. I stood at the courtyard entrance trying to figure out where she had gone when I became aware of a faint whirring noise and while I was puzzling over that another creature with a long beard darted out of a nearby doorway, lugging a huge bundle of clothes.

I rushed after him. "Where is everybody?" I asked. "There doesn't seem to be a soul in the city."

"There is work now and we must work,"

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he said, hurrying on while I kept pace beside him. "There is not time to go outside for soon there will be eight or maybe ten weeks when there is no work. Then we can go outside, but now we must work."

He darted into a doorway and the door closed in my face. There was work now and soon there would be no work; they had no time to talk to a curious individual whom they had never seen before.

I looked at the one-story shack looming drab and gloomy in front of me. From here too came that whirring sound, a sort of drone that would rise to a sharp, high pitch and then die down to a faint whirring moan as though it had no more strength to go on. I listened for a moment and knocked on the door.

A woman, her head wrapped in an old shawl, opened it. I could not see for a moment when I entered because of the dim light, but as I stood there explaining why I was there the whirring grew louder and then I saw that the sound came from two Singer sewing machines near a window so covered with steam from the breath of those in the room that it was opaque. Two men in their shirt sleeves sat at the machines, working by the half light that came through the panes. I could not make out their faces for they were against the light, but when they talked the voices were those of young men. As my eyes became accustomed to the light in the room I made out another woman, a shawl wrapped round her, and four little children squatting on the plain board floor looking up at me curiously. The woman who had opened the door for me seemed to be crouching, as if about to pounce on me. It was a little while before I realized that she had sat over those whirring machines for so many years that her spine had been permanently affected and that she could not walk upright.

"What is this street called?" I asked.

"Koscioska," came a man's voice from a dark corner of the room. It was not until he spoke that I noticed a bearded figure bent over a wooden table cutting cloth with a long pair of shears.

"How do you spell it?"

"Spell it? I do not know. He is the one to whom there is a monument in Lodz. I hear he went to America to help make them free. I have a daughter in America," he added, "but I never hear from her."

I took out a piece of paper to make some notes.

"And your name?"

"Why do you want his name?" the woman with the twisted spine suddenly asked in a frightened voice. "His lungs are better now. It is not necessary to take him away. See, he is working very hard, so why do you want his name?"

She snatched up a little child playing among the few sticks of wood near the stove as though she feared I would take the child too.

"I am not here to take him away," I explained gently. "I did not even know that his lungs were bad."

"Everybody's lungs are bad," said a young voice from the whirring machines.

"My name is Platter," said the old man, trembling.

"Don't give him your name!" the woman cautioned excitedly. "Maybe he will take you away. How can you tell?"

"How many children have you?"

"Ten," he said, continuing his cutting.

"There! What did I tell you!" the woman cried despairingly. "He will take the children away."

"No, no, no, I only want to know how you live—"

"How we live?" The old man raised his head, turned to his wife and then to the two men working at the machines. "He wants to know how we live! He has come from America to see how we live!"

He chuckled as though it was very funny, a chuckle that was abruptly broken by a fit of coughing.

"There!" the woman cried in agony. "See! Now he sees that you are not well and will take you away and then how will we live?"

"He wants to know how we live!" the old man repeated gasping for breath from the fit of coughing.

"You see how we live," said a voice from the whirring machines."

"How can all of you sleep in these two rooms?"

"On one another," said the voice from the machines. "On one another and on the floor covered up by the pants we are making when there are not enough rags to cover ourselves."

"How many hours a day do you work?"

"Eighteen," said the voice from the machine.

"And what do you earn for a full day's work?"

"When we have work, maybe a zloty, maybe a zloty and a half." (20 to 30 cents.)

The terrified woman who had been quiet for a few moments interrupted shrilly:

"Don't talk to him! Why did he come here? There are other houses where they work eighteen hours a day and make a zloty. And in what house are they not coughing up their lungs? Why did he choose us? What misfortune has come to us! Don't talk to him!"

"Be quiet," a voice from the machines said. "He is not come to bring misfortune. He is come to see how we live."

"He wants to see how we live? Well, he has seen—"

THE door opened and a squat figure in baggy pants and a dirty, torn shirt, open at the neck, came in. He had a dirty rag wound around his neck for a scarf and it seemed to emphasize his sunken cheeks and the head almost swamped by a huge cap with a cracked brim. He was Moisha Bierbaum who lived in a street also named after a Polish liberator—Pilsudski Street, No. 20, and as I talked with him I realized that I was not growing hard of hearing, but that he was toothless and had a disease of the throat that made his voice unusually faint.

"Go with him and see how they live," said the woman who was by now almost hysterical because I did not go, so I left her in peace and went with Moisha Bierbaum through the still deserted streets of the dead city. We climbed worn and broken stairs in a two-story building and entered a low-ceilinged room where two boys of not more than seventeen or eighteen sat at Singer sewing machines. There was a wood-burning stove just big enough to heat a small kettle of water in the center of the room, a long table at which Moisha himself worked and another table near the sewing machines where two pasty-faced children worked on boys' pants piled high before them. One of the children, a little barefoot girl with red-rimmed watery eyes, had a rag around her throat. She raised her head to glance at me curiously for a moment and then bent it low again to her work.

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Seven," she said in a faint, husky voice.

"And you?" I asked the child standing on a wooden stool because he was not big enough to reach the table at which he worked.

"Nine," said the boy.

"But he is as little as a four- or five-year-old child?" I said to the father, while the mother stared, frightened and helpless.

"He cannot grow up," said Moisha Bierbaum toothlessly. "Something is the matter with him and he just doesn't grow up and we can't take him to a doctor."

"Haven't you ever found out what's the matter with him?"

"Ah!" he exclaimed, cutting rapidly, "I have worse woes than that. I have a boy who is fifteen and he is not bigger than this little one. He is crippled. He cannot walk and today, because he coughed so much, I let him go outside. Otherwise he is working with us."

"How many hours a day do you work?"

"Everybody in Brzeziny works eighteen hours a day—when there is work. If we don't work somebody else will get it."

"What time do you get up?"

"At four and by five we are at work and we eat while we work for we do not dare to stop."

"But it is dark—?"

"We use a candle. And that, too, costs money—to burn candles during these long winter months and we have to pay for the cotton for the sewing machines—"

"What do you earn when you work eighteen hours?"

"Eighty groshen. (16 cents). Sometimes we earn a zloty and sometimes even a zloty and a half. I have not paid rent for five years," he volunteered.

"What does the landlord say?"

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"He has threatened to throw me out and now he tells me this is the last year he will let me live here. But how can I pay rent when we have nothing to eat and my children are crippled and one died from the lungs and the others don't grow up—"

The words issued from him in a rush, tumbling over one another as they came from his toothless gums.

"But if you are so poor, how did you get enough money to buy these two machines?"

"Ah," he said, "they are my dowry. I got two machines for marrying my wife so we can both work."

"How do you manage to live?"

"We eat bread and drink water."

MOISHA BIERBAUM cut cloth rapidly, the children bent low over their work, the Singer sewing machines whirred and the mother, her hands clasped nervously, stood rooted to the spot where she had been standing when I first entered, a tragic picture of dejection and misery.

"Well," I said finally, "what is to be done about these things?"

"There is nothing to be done," Moisha said slowly. "So we sit at the machines until we die. Many have died—just sitting at the machines. Two weeks ago, one died so—sitting at the machine and his wife lost three days' work because she had to pay to clean the pants he had spoiled with the blood from his lungs. He had tried to spit out mouthfuls of blood, but he was too weak, sitting there at the machine, and it fell on the pants and spoiled them."

"Aren't you organized here? Didn't anybody ever try to organize you?"

Everybody began to talk at once. The boys at the machines and the wife of Moisha Bierbaum. Yes, they had been organized, but the organizers had sold them out.

"Then why don't you organize yourselves if you can't trust the professional organizers?"

"It cannot be done," said Moisha Bierbaum. "A union is no good when everybody is hungry. We have had strikes here. Everybody agreed to stop work, but here a man needed milk because of his lungs and where was he to get the milk if he didn't work? And there a child was sick and needed bread and where were they to get bread if they did not work? And so it is, woe is us and woe to our people! In the early morning somebody would smuggle in some work and then somebody else heard that they were working and they too got work. The people here cannot go on strike. They are too hungry."

"Haven't you any leaders at all?"

"Can the blind lead the blind?" he asked, waving his shears.

"You are Jews. You have a synagogue?"

"Of course," he said with surprise.

"And isn't the rabbi a leader?"

"Ah, the rabbi!" everybody began with a note of disgust. "He eats well. He doesn't care about us. When we give birth to a son and must have him circumcised the rabbi says 'Give me four zloty and if you do not give me four zloty then I will not circumcise him.' And how can we let our sons grow up without being circumcised? For this boy here"—he stopped work and ran over quickly to the little boy standing on a stool—"she sold her golden wedding ring to have him circumcised. Where can we get four zloty?"

"Then what have you got a synagogue for?"

"To pray in," Moisha Bierbaum remarked with a shrug.

"And what do you pray for?"

"For the end to come quickly by God's own will," he said slowly.

WHEN I returned to Warsaw a Polish diplomat invited me to tea in the Hotel Europejski's cheerful and richly-upholstered café where the capital's "best people" gather.

Here at little glass-topped tables sit the men who run Poland and the women who wear their jewels. Here they come almost every day to drink a coffee or liqueur, read the papers and discuss world affairs. Wherever you look are more beautiful women expensively perfumed; diamond bracelets and gold earrings flash as they turn their graceful heads or raise their lovely arms; and over all is the buzz of cultured voices and the soft sound of laughter. And sitting in this atmosphere my host talked with me long and earnestly. Poland was poor, so distressingly poor—

I remembered that Henryk Gruber, one of the biggest of Poland's bankers, had told me frankly that the ruling class of his country totalled between 50,000 and 100,000 people and the rest of the thirty-three and a half millions paid tribute. I told my friend, the diplomat, what Gruber had said and he nodded and then I told him of what incredible misery I had seen during my visit.

"Shocking," he said when I finished. "Yes; I know. It is as I told you. Poland is terribly poor."

"What is Poland—these people—doing?" I nodded towards those about us.

"Most of them know only vaguely that conditions are so bad. The government is trying to raise farm produce prices so as to increase the country's purchasing power."

He talked to me as diplomats talk—suavely, culturedly, saying nothing except that Poland was poor, very poor.

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Martial Law Grips Indiana

"A Day Is a Year" in Indiana

RUTH CRAWFORD

FOUR Indiana counties—Sullivan, Vigo, Floyd, Clark—are under martial law. A resolution calling for a statewide general strike is being acted upon by the Indiana Central Labor unions throughout the ninety-two counties in the state; and a *regiment of the United States army, stationed at Fort Benjamin Harrison, near Indianapolis, is being motorized in order that it will be able to move swiftly into strike territory.*

Contrast this ugly picture with the comment of a striker's daughter in Terre Haute when the National Guard moved into that city during its "labor holiday" last July. She said, with incredulous naivete, "The National Guard is not supposed to take sides, but they sure do in this case. They have closed the Labor Temple, the strikers' own property. I don't see a law like that."

Today her words recall Lenin's observation: "During a revolution millions and tens of millions of people learn each week more than they do in a year of the usual somnolent life."

What have the Hoosiers learned?

Since that July day when the National Guard came into Terre Haute, gassed, clubbed and bayoneted the workers around the Columbia Enameling and Stamping Company's plant, closed the Labor Temple, broke up the commissary, threw the strike leaders in jail along with protesting liberals, banned all public meeting of workers, closed the churches, commandeered the radio station, *censored even the union order calling off the strike,* neither side has been in doubt about the truth of Lenin's statement: "The state is the instrument of the ruling class."

"I don't see a law like that," the Terre Haute workers may have cried out in bewilderment at the beginning of this struggle, but that cry has been lost in the mighty chorus of angry protest that has risen now along the Wabash. It is as if the Bill of Rights, memorized by every Indiana school child, had never been written. All meetings are conducted by the grace of the commander of the National Guard who boasts that Sullivan and Vigo counties are under a fascist dictatorship and that he is the dictator.

The Guard is ready to handle any emergency, even to supply scabs to enamel the pots and pans for the Columbia Enameling and Stamping Company, where the workers are still on strike.

This use of the militia is foolproof. It costs the employer nothing, not even bed and board for strikebreakers. The taxpayers foot the bill. Let the men strike, bring the guard in while the federal government sends in conciliators. When the guard is in and the picket line broken, let the representatives of the government go conciliating elsewhere! The situation is well in hand. Then, if the men and women are still foolhardy enough to refuse to work in your mill, give their jobs to the guardsmen. Most of them are young and have never had a job. They can work in the daytime and drill at night.

Democratic Governor McNutt, the former national commander of the American Legion, understands these things. He can be counted on. What worked in Sullivan county for the last three years and what has worked in Vigo county since last July was good enough to be applied in Floyd and Clark counties when labor trouble broke out in the B. Fine shirt factories January 20, following the company's attempt to bring in scabs from across the Ohio River.

There is only one hitch in this fascist program—the resistance of the organized labor movement. A day has been as a year in its education. It stands valiantly under the historic task placed upon it as the defender of the rights of the American people in its state. It has dealt blow for blow, gaining strength, courage, vision with each victory.

FROM the trade unions of Indiana come resolution after resolution ringing with the impassioned eloquence of the Declaration of Independence. Last fall, in defiance of a federal conciliator's attack upon organized labor in connection with the Terre Haute general strike, the following was issued:

> The Central Labor Union of Terre Haute and Vigo county, further realizing its public responsibility, will also continue its fight for free speech, free assembly, and a free press, and will use every means at its command to combat the attempt to set up a fascist-military dictatorship in Vigo county that deprives workers of their liberty, keeps them jailed with no charge against them, denies them counsel, trial by jury and even suspends the writ of habeas corpus. Organized labor still stands for liberty and justice.

But more than words are needed. The first step was a boycott of merchants who might be inclined to join the Law and Order League set up immediately by the local vigilantes, whose illustrious board of directors included the town's Liberty Leaguers, ex-Ku Klux Klan attorneys, bankers and manufacturers. Twenty thousand citizens signed in favor of the boycott within three days after its initiation.

The second step was the broadening of union activities to the surrounding counties. The next was re-winning the right to public assemblage. Conservative labor leaders stood beside Norman Thomas when he spoke from the courthouse steps defying authorities to arrest him at the first assemblage of workers following the martial law edict. Today, Norman Thomas, the Socialist, is the town's hero.

A bitter fight, with Powers Hapgood as its spearhead, reestablished the picket line around the factory. Even now, ten months after the strike was broken by the state militia, one hundred join the picket line nightly, kept alive by a commissary provided by the trade unions, sympathetic merchants and farmers.

Resolutions endorsing the Farmer Labor Party have been passed by many locals. They do not need to be reminded that it was a Republican governor, Ed Jackson, who clamped martial law down on Sullivan county three years ago; and that the Republican mayor of Terre Haute sent the call for troops to the Democrat, McNutt.

Both the Socialist and Communist parties gained influence. Before the strike, although Terre Haute was the home town of Gene Debs, there were only five Socialist Party members in the town and the Communist Party was represented by a small isolated group. Since then, the Communist Party has become firmly established and the Socialists can pack auditoriums for Norman Thomas.

A United Front has been effected. Many liberals have played a prominent part in winning support for the trade unions. At least they have made the vigilantes retreat before public opinion. Typical of the feeling in Indiana, was the action of the labor-union delegate at a citizens' meeting called to plan a peace celebration for Armistice Day. He declared that organized labor would take no part in a meeting attended by a representative of the Law and Order League. The League's attorney left the meeting; the labor delegates stayed.

THUS, they choose sides. The class line has sharpened. The issue is fascism; and those who are against it have rallied 'round the trade unions. Fascism, if it comes, will do so only if it overcomes severe resistance.

The death struggles of the little "rugged individualists," fighting desperately against the competition of the great corporations, are accompanied by fascist attacks. During the last two decades, the latter have been moving into this last stronghold of home-owned industries.

These great corporations paid higher wages than people were accustomed to in

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Indiana, but the trouble was that they did not need men. Just a skeleton staff of highly-paid technicians and a crew of laborers. Machines did the rest. Thus there was thrown on the market a surplus of labor power. This cheap labor market helped home-owned industries survive. These low wages, in turn, attracted other industries into the state, such as the run-away garment factories.

By the time the N.R.A. entered the field, Indiana's economy was riddled. For instance, in Vigo county, seventeen percent of the population was on relief. Men worked for little or nothing and their women worked in the garment and canning factories for less. The New Deal brought hope. Its promises were taken seriously by these believing Hoosiers, third and fourth generation native American stock. They were at a loss to understand why they were impoverished in this land of plenty. So they organized; and they struck.

They made headway with organization except in the plants owned by the big corporations. With money at their command, the latter could afford small concessions in the matter of wages, thus forestalling agitation for unions. But for the little rugged individualists—such as those who own the Columbia Enameling and Stamping Company in Terre Haute and those who own the B. Fine shirt factories in Floyd and Clark counties—the price of concessions meant actual peril to their existence.

From manufacturers of this sort has come the resistance. Indiana has become the battleground of these small-time manufacturers making their last stand against the big corporations, seeking their own salvation at the sacrifice of the workers.

But out of this death struggle of the little "rugged individualists" there is coming a mighty labor movement, tested at every step of its march to power. It is beset at every turn not only by the power of its immediate employers, the little fellows. It has to fight the big ones, too, for they naturally are supporting those whom they will eventually put to death themselves.

At present, however, the little firms are useful to them so long as they bear the brunt of the fight with the unions. To the big corporations and their pawns, the small manufacturers, belongs the state and its power.

Sullivan—Vigo—now Floyd and Clark counties!

Where next? And fully aware that an attack against one is an attack against all, the unions talk general strike, for the state, not unmindful that when they strike, Indiana's good roads may be used for the swift passage of federal troops from Fort Harrison to the strike areas.

What events in Indiana portend for the nation is embodied in a resolution passed last week by the Central Labor Union of Terre Haute:

> Whereas, this peculiar type of military dictatorship has become so popular throughout Indiana as a means of breaking strikes that it is being copied in other states and will become an established practice if it is not defeated here; and
>
> Whereas, the Indiana type of military law has all the attributes of a fascist dictatorship; and
>
> Whereas, such fascist tactics have become a matter of national concern, therefore, be it resolved by this meeting of the the Central Labor Union of Terre Haute and Vigo county that all American citizens be called once more to assert their Americanism by protesting to Governor McNutt against such atrocities; and
>
> That the United States Congress be urged to conduct a Congressional investigation into the administration of Governor McNutt.

Are the trade unionists of Indiana to be answered with federal troops or a Congressional investigation?

Speech to Those Who Say Comrade

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

The brotherhood is not by the blood certainly:
But neither are men brothers by speech—by saying so:
Men are brothers by life lived and are hurt for it:

Hunger and hurt are the great begetters of brotherhood:
Humiliation has gotten much love:
Danger I say is the nobler father and mother:

Those are as brothers whose bodies have shared fear
Or shared harm or shared hurt or indignity:
Why are the old soldiers brothers and nearest?

For this: that their minds can go over the sea a little
And find themselves in their youth again as they were in
Soissons and Meaux and at Ypres and those cities:

A French loaf and the girls with their eyelids painted
Bring back to aging and lonely men
Their twentieth year and the metal odor of danger:

It is this in life which of all things is tenderest—
To remember together with unknown men the days
Common also to them and perils ended:

It is this which makes of many a generation—
A wave of men who having the same years
Have in common the same dead and the changes:

The solitary and unshared experience
Dies of itself like the violations of love
Or lives on as the dead live eerily:

The unshared and single man must cover his
Loneliness as a girl her shame for the way of
Life is neither by one man nor his suffering:

Who are the born brothers in truth? The puddlers
Scorched by the same flame in the same foundries:
Those who have spit on the same boards with the blood in it:

Ridden the same rivers with green logs:
Fought the police in the parks of the same cities:
Grinned for the same blows: the same flogging:

Veterans out of the same ships—factories—
Expeditions for fame: the founders of continents:
Those that hid in Geneva a time back:

Those that have hidden and hunted and all such—
Fought together: labored together:
they carry the
Common look like a card and they pass touching:

Brotherhood! No word said can make you brothers!
Brotherhood only the brave earn and by danger or
Harm or by bearing hurt and by no other:

Brotherhood here in the strange world is the rich and
Rarest giving of life and the most valued—
Not to be had for a word or a week's wishing.

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Unhappy? Troubled? Undecided?

EDWIN SEAVER

Unhappy? Troubled? Undecided? Business or personal. Call Psychologist.—Adv.

"ANY mail?" Mr. Ostman the postman paused obligingly to fumble through the remaining letters in his hand.

"Let me see now. . . . Freer Freer Freer Freer. . . . Nope. Looks like I can't do anything for you, Mr. Freer. . . . "

"Wait a minute! Here's something!" Mr. Ostman exclaimed triumphantly extracting an envelope and handing it to Alex, his china-blue popeyes shining with simple pleasure. "Looks like a bill to me."

"It would be," Alex said trying hard not to look crestfallen. He could feel his knees go weak under him. "Well . . . thanks just the same."

"Anyway, you've got lots of company," said Mr. Ostman shoving the letters deftly through the slits in the vestibule wall. "Seems like I handle more bills these days then anything else. . . . Say, did you read about Two-Gun Dowling killing that cop last night because he asked him to show his automobile license? Right around the neighborhood here. Only a kid, too. Can you beat it?"

Alex couldn't.

Mr. Ostman hitched his heavy bag higher on his shoulder. "They're combing the city for him now. Boy, I wouldn't like to be in his shoes, would you?" He shook his head solemnly.

"Well, I'll be seeing you," he announced abruptly shoving his way through the vestibule door.

Nor wind nor rain nor snow nor dark of night. . . . Alex stared abstractedly through the plate-glass door at the bent back of the postman crossing the street, then down at the envelope he was still holding in his hand . . . shall stay these messengers from their appointed rounds.

Another souvenir of my buried life.

He shoved the bill into his pocket, unopened. What was the use of opening it, he thought hopelessly feeling suddenly old and very tired in the morning as he turned to climb the stairs again, holding his breath against the infirmary stench of lysol from the newly-washed unventilated hallways and steps.

Outside his neighbor's door the morning tabloid lay alongside a quart bottle of milk.

POLICE COMB CITY
FOR COP KILLER

—SEE PAGE 2

Alex looked down on the pictures on page one without seeing them, without seeing anything, without knowing anything but the worrying starving little grey mice of his thoughts gnawing at his brain for some new way of wangling another day's food and shelter.

And I shall end up tucked in bed
Safe with a bullet through my head.

Abominable doggerel. Secret trapdoor: for escape only. When all other remedies fail try suicide.

"Damnation!" he swore under his breath fumbling in his empty pocket. "I've forgotten the key again." He pressed the bell gingerly.

The door opened narrowly to reveal Catherine's unnaturally pale face, her large dark eyes still twilit with sleep, bulging slightly under the heavy lids. Anemia? How badly she looks, thought Alex, aware of a sharp stab of pain in his heart. Standing barefooted in her long white gown, her night-cloudy hair falling loosely about her delicate face and shoulders, she looked like a little girl and seeing her at that moment he wanted to lift her in his arms and hold her close to him so that she might know all the things he longed so much to tell her and could not bring himself to say anymore.

"Where did you disappear to so suddenly?"

"What's the matter? Can't I go out for a second without your holding an inquest over it?"

Catherine turned away with disgust and an unfathomable hurt in her eyes.

O my God! thought Alex. Another day has begun.

"So you're still looking for mail, are you?"

"What if I am?" Alex flushed angrily. "Is that any concern of yours?"

For a moment he stood glaring at her defenceless back, furious with himself for losing his temper, then brushed past her into the living room.

He was sorry he had spoken in anger. He had not meant to, but he had done it anyway. His patience was like dry tinder these days, dried up from the drought within him, wanting only the slightest spark to set it aflame. Now he stood by the window looking down into the sunstrewn quiet street, rubbing his hand nervously across his forehead as if he would smooth out the painful creases in his brain.

Only a few minutes ago we were still in each other's arms. And now this. Better to end it all, better to have done with it all then to go on like this.

Alex swallowed hard trying to fight back his tears. Yes, it was enough to weep for humiliation, knowing that all your horizon was shrunk to the size of a dollar bill. If this was all one was born for. . . .

From the bathroom came the sound of retching.

"Catherine!"

Alex was beside her, holding her damp cold forhead tightly in the palm of his hand, feeling all her body shudder against him as the spasms shook her and left her trembling.

"Why didn't you tell me you were sick, honey? I didn't know."

"Go away," she said wearily, "please go away," pushing him from her feebly with her elbow. "Leave me alone."

But when he did not go away and her nausea had left her she leaned against him clinging, burying her head in his shoulder, her hands clasped behind his neck.

"Oh Alex, I feel so sick, I feel so badly. . . . Don't be angry with me."

"I angry with you!" His arm tightened about her, straining her to him. "Don't be silly, darling. I may be angry with myself, but not with you. . . . Come, you're shivering, you'll catch cold. Let me put you in bed again." He swept his free arm under her knees and, lifting her, carried her like a child to the other room.

"Now you just wait here a minute until I get you something to eat," he said tucking the bedclothes fondly about her waist, straightening the pillow in back of her head. "The trouble with you is that you're not eating properly. No, you're not. I can imagine how you neglect yourself when I'm not here to look after you."

"Please don't bring me anything." Catherine held his hand firmly in hers against his going. "I couldn't bear the sight of food just now, my stomach's so jittery."

"But this can't go on, honey. You've been sick like this every morning now for weeks. Why don't you let me call the doctor? I could go down to the drugstore and phone. It would only take a minute."

"Don't call any doctors for me," Catherine said, her voice suddenly going flat as she released his hand.

"But I've got to do something," Alex sat down next to her on the edge of the bed. "I can't let you just go on like this day after day as if it was nothing at all."

She did not say anything. She was cupping one tight little breast in her hand—through the thin stuff of her gown he could see the nipple straining darkly against the material—looking down at her breast wistfully. Alex saw her lips tremble and feeling his heart ache for her saw the tears gather silently under her lowered lids and silently stream down her cheeks.

"Why are you crying darling?" He tilted

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up her head, his fingers under her quivering chin. "Don't cry honey. Please. What is it? Tell me."

When she did not lift her eyes he threw his arms around her, kissing her hair, her eyes, her mouth, trying to make her dumb pain his own, feeling the salt of her tears on his own lips, her fingers plucking frantically at his shirt, groping their way under to his body.

Oh my God! A thought flashed across his brain leaving in its wake a quiet awful interval of fear and joy.

"Listen honey. Listen to me," he whispered, grasping her shoulders tensely. "Tell me, is it because, because you're going to have a . . . . "

Her hands grew strangely still, fell emptily on her lap, the palms up, the slender delicate beautiful fingers slightly curling, and in the silence Alex thought he could hear their hearts beating. When he got up from the bed she bent over, resting her head on her knees, her hair streaming over the white sheet.

A rush of tenderness shook him, seeing the slight ridge of spine under the gown, the fragile nape of neck with the downy hairs upon it, the curve of shoulder where the gown had slipped away and was falling loosely over one arm, and suddenly he wanted to laugh, to turn a handspring, to knock his head crazily against the wall. It was all so funny, really, terrifying and funny. A baby . . . now . . . when they couldn't even take care of themselves, when the very roof was being lifted from over their heads. There was a time, three or four years ago, when they could have well afforded . . . and now that the lean years were upon them. . . .

"Are you sure?" he said seeing his face suddenly in the mirror grinning foolishly.

"I saw Doctor Samuels," she said, her words muffled in the bedclothes. "Three days ago."

"What did he say?"

"He said . . . 'of course, good Lord' "—her voice broke and now she too was laughing hysterically—" 'didn't I know?' "

Alex sat down beside her again and put his arm around her and drew her close.

"Why didn't you tell me sooner?"

"I wanted to." Her head was on his shoulder and he could feel the cold tip of her nose tickling his neck. "I was going to that same night, but when you came home looking so tired and lost I didn't know what to do any more. . . . And then the dispossess notice on top of everything. You looked so dreadful when you saw it I thought you were going to faint."

"To hell with the dispossess notice. Let 'em keep their lousy apartment. What do we care?"

"Care." Catherine sighed. "What is there left of anything but care. . . . Oh Alex if we could only go away, somewhere far away, and find ourselves again. Sometimes I feel so old. . . . "

He rested his cheek against her hair. "Tell me, darling, are you glad?"

"I don't know."

"Sad?"

"Sometimes . . . terribly . . . when I think. . . . "

"Mad?"

"I was. I could have slain you."

"Bad."

He reached down and smacked her on the rump.

She laughed, happily it seemed to Alex for the first time in ages, laughed, kissing his neck. Then leaned back in the crescent his arm made and shaking away her hair with a toss of her head met his eyes earnestly.

"What are we going to do, Alex?"

"What are we going to do? What do you think we're going to do, you little goose? We're going to have a baby, that's what we're going to do. . . . Or at least, you are."

Catherine bit her lip, her eyes narrowing.

"If that was all. . . . If all I had to think about was having it. . . . But look how things are with us?"

"I know, I know, honey. But they'll get better, they'll just have to, somehow."

And if they didn't? If things kept on getting worse and worse? . . . The worrying starving little grey mice had fled, but now they were back again gnawing feverishly at his brain. . . . There were still nine months, eight, seven at any rate, to find some sort of work again, some means of earning a livelihood. If you kept looking, if you kept throwing yourself from hole to hole like in the pin game they used to play with marbles when they were kids, somehow, somewhere you were bound to find a place.

And thinking of this Alex saw his life, not his life only but the lives of all his class everywhere, like an elongated barren inclined plane studded with nails for obstacles and himself one marble in the company of his innumerable fellows all plunging breathlessly desperately downhill from pillar to post, all seeking some haven, some harbor from the mad scramble until at last they should drop exhausted and spent into the last hole and the game would be over.

The vision was bitter as tobacco drugs in his mouth.

Catherine was fingering his necktie nervously, avoiding his gaze with lowered eyes. "I thought maybe I ought. . . . " Her cheeks flushed hotly.

"Now you didn't think any such thing. Remember. . . . And if you did, you hadn't ought to."

"But maybe it would be best, darling." She looked up at him somberly, her dark eyes smoldering under the heavy lids. "Now, before it's too late!"

Alex got to his feet and paced the room.

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country. . . . Even if we wanted to, where's the money coming from? *We* wanted to! O hypocrite, coward, Judas! Confess the dark, the sneaking thought, the easy escape over her dead self, and point the lying finger of circumstance.

And feeling in his own guts the probing precise sterile implements of death, the sweet loved body of her racked and drained, fatally purposelessly mending, the sweat that started to his brow and got into his eyes was heavy and dark as blood and suddenly he felt faint and thought he was going to be sick.

"Goddam it Catherine!" he cried smashing his fist against the night-table. "Haven't we been deprived enough? We'll not sacrifice our child. We'll fight this lousy death-ridden world for his life. If we're defeated, so be it. But he'll not be. He'll live to see a better world, be sure of that."

"If one could be sure of anything. . . . " said Catherine. "It's all so much like a bog stretching as far as you can see. The more you struggle to pull your feet out the deeper in you sink."

Alex stuck his hand in his pocket and withdrew it nervously, feeling the unopened envelope crinkling between his fingers.

"It'll be hard for us, of course," he said staring gloomily down through the window pane into the littered alleyway below. "But it's hard either way. At least we'll know what the hell we're struggling about."

The Untouchable

Valkyrie-hair, blondined by the holiday sun,
Flashing up the driveway in an airflow Eight—
Heroine of a thousand private tourist agencies,
Heartbroken in Montivideo, exhausted by Paris,
Amused in Hollywood, sick of New York, sick of
Chasteness and sex, sick of travel and leisure,
Refusing Martinis, jobs, refusing all but men,
Here she is: "No use to myself or anyone else"
She says; and, "I'm unhappy. What shall I do?
What you say is true, but far too depressing."
What shall she do? Well, as she walks the plank,
As she tips over the deck of the middleclass,
Pirate ship of state, she can say it isn't so,
She can tell us that there is no Santa Claus,
She can will her body, her story and her mind
To the museum we will build, with our wealth
In the long leisure we shall take from her.

JAMES NEUGASS.

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The Klan Rides Again

A Stenographic Report of the Klan Meeting at Atlanta

FROM their "Klavern" (meeting hall) which is on Beecher Street at the corner of Cascade Road, they formed a double line and marched silently, two by two to a nearby empty lot, which was surrounded by woods. The Klansmen were all dressed in white robes and white hoods and faces were completely masked. *Two police officers stood at the corner during the entire meeting.*

In the center of the field a loud speaker was set up and through this the chairman called the numbers 112-34. The Klansmen formed a large circle. There were about 150. The leader was dressed in red satin, also fully masked with a red hood over his head. Addressing them he started: "Klansmen, Klanswomen (there were no women) and friends. On this the 20th anniversary of the Ku Klux Klan I have the honor, the great privilege and the pleasure to introduce Mr. H. C. Berkman, Klan giant from Kentucky." (It was later announced that the speaker was A. C. Moore from Columbus.)

Mr. Moore: "I appreciate that greatly, because we believe that never in our history is needed such an organization as the Ku Klux Klan as it is needed today. . . .

"My friends, the threat of war has again started in Europe. And we must build a strong defense on the land and sea with army and navy.

"And, my friends, we are facing a great problem: Communism. Communism has always been with us since way back in the days of Plato. It is not new. But when Russia took over the country and hoisted the red flag of the Communists, then the world began to understand that something new had been done.

"Communism stands for the destruction of property; the destruction of home; the destruction of womanhood; the destruction of government. (You say 'We need not worry about what happened in Russia.' But now, at this moment, a rebellion is going on in China, in South America.) They want to bring the whole world under the dome of Moscow. They said: 'We want to rule the whole world' and so they sent 68,000 foreigners, agitators, dirty Communists to the United States of America, paid with Moscow's shiny gold.

"God saved America for the world. When Europe was sorely pressed God gave them another continent which is the United States of America. (At this point there are yells from the Klansmen.)

"On Thanksgiving Day, 1915, the organization was reborn and kneeling at the fiery cross on top of Stone Mountain, we pledged to fight for the restriction of foreign immigation. (More yells.) That people are listening to these soap-box speakers, these Russian foreigners, who want to destroy good government, put up a red flag in place of Old Glory and let Washington take its orders from Moscow.

"You men who get up early every morning to work hard to earn a little home. The Communists want to take it away from you and give it to the bums that ride the freight cars and never do a lick of work. They say that it doesn't belong to you and is the property of the state. Your wife, who has lived with you for ten years or twenty-five years, they would say doesn't belong to you and is the property of the state and any man who wants her could have her. They say your children do not belong to you. They would take them away and educate them to Communism and turn them against you—their own fathers and mothers. Do you like that?

"In Russia there is no unemployment. Yes, there is no unemployment. They list you as a working man and put you to work and make you do what they want you to and if you don't like it they put you up against the wall and shoot you down. Do you like that?

"And another thing: The Communists preach absolute equality of race. He goes to where you are working and puts his arm upon your shoulder and with that arm still warm he goes and puts that same arm around the niggers. He goes to the nigger section and says to them: 'Don't you know you can sit in front seats on street cars and have a white wife?

"And they are making an impression. NIGGERS ARE PICKETING A WHITE STORE! They are trying to force a white store to hire nigger help. If any man of you would go into a store and buy merchandise from a nigger clerk, then God have mercy upon your dirty soul!

"Do you believe a nigger that cleans your streets and cooks your food and shines your shoes is as good as you are? If you do, then join the Communist Party. And I warn you that the Klan is riding again.

"We believe in free speech, but not for Communists. We have another system in Columbus. We find out where they are and wipe them out. We find their meeting places and wipe it from the face of the earth. There are Communists in Atlanta. Our job is to seek them out.

"There is a Communist at this meeting. And I dare you to come out and start something. (Crowd yells.) I'm not afraid of you. My name is A. C. Moore from Columbus and I'm not afraid to show my face and I dare you to come up and show your face. I'd show you that no dirty Red is going to take my country away. (More yells from crowd.) Under my robe beats a 100-percent white heart. I know that there are dirty sneaking Reds at this meeting, but I'm not afraid of you. I dare you to start something. We'd show you a thing or two. (More yells.) I warn you that the Klansmen are riding again. And better that you slit your throat from ear to ear or tie a rope around it and weigh it down and jump to the bottom of the ocean than to let the Klansmen catch you. (More yells.)

"Our job now is to find out how many are buying from nigger clerks. Did you see where one of Rogers' stores here had their white clerks take their picture with nigger clerks and published it in a nigger paper? (Atlanta World.) No real white man would take his picture with a nigger. I would no more do that than I would climb Stone Mountain to kiss the — of a mosquito. And no real Protestant would buy from a man who would take his picture with a nigger. Any man who would do that—well, all I can say is that may God have mercy on his rotten, filthy soul!

"We got to keep the nigger in his place. We'll show them that the Klan is riding again. . . ."

KU KLUX KLAN

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The Croppers Prepare

Report of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Congress

"HERE'S a man from Hell's Acre," said Walter Moskop, an Arkansas cropper who himself has reason to know. A "poor white" of the cotton belt and with the union from its inception, he was introducing a fellow-fighter, a Negro cropper, to his brother delegates of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union convention which was held in Little Rock's Labor Temple this past week.

"Brother Ware," Moskop continued, "comes from Birdson, Arkansas. Here's a man who lives there and who's stuck through all the fighting and bullets."

A little man with iron-gray hair, brown skin and a patient gentleness, stood by Moskop. "Brothers," he said, "I'm not able to explain exactly what my heart desires to say to you about our union." He paused, obviously seeking his words. "I figure it'd be nothing to sacrifice my life to break down the justice we got. But us here are in unity. . . . My wife lies home sick. I asked myself, could I leave her? I'd be a poor man if I profess and set home and do nothing. So I come—

"My wife, (she's the only one I can talk to,) she says, 'Amos, you go out in the fields, a-talking, you risk your life.' I say, 'What is this, if I sit at home, but death? If I go, I adventure and may win life and freedom.'" His voice rang deeper. "America, they say, is our country. But it has been taken away from us, reversed in our hands. We must learn the right way to deliver ourselves."

Eitaro Ishigaki.

Otis Sweeden, whom chairman Moskop next introduced, came from the plains of Oklahoma. Son of a Cherokee Indian and Scotch-Irish mother, he described in rapid-fire American lingo how the Cherokee Indians, the Mexicans, Negroes and whites had grown tired of picking spinach, beets and onions for a quarter a day, then having to pay Griffin Manufacturing Company, which owned the plantation, a dime for transportation out of that.

"At first they were leery," he told the convention. "Over in Oklahoma, plenty of unions've been a racket. But we proved our union different. All races together. We won free transportation and a raise on spinach from 3 to 10 cents a bushel basket and in ten months we got seventy-five locals with 9,500 members in our Farmers' and Farm-Laborers' Union. Then we heard about the Southen Tenant Farmers' Union; we decided to line up with you. We had some Christmas. No relief checks at Muskoges for six weeks, not even potatoes in the house, let alone any candy or toys for the kids. Nice day, Christmas. So my wife and me made some stew for the boys and afterwards, six hundred of us went down to the relief. The officer promised us if we'd go home, we'd get our checks the next day. But we ain't got them yet." (Relief work in Oklahoma is paid twenty-nine dollars a month.)

"You've been doing swell work over here in Arkansas," the Oklahomian continued, "but we're only to first base."

"That's right!" delegates echoed.

"Each man's gotta be an organizer unto himself," this son of a Cherokee went on, "Lean on nobody but yourself. They make us live no better than peons. Conditions are nowhere so bad as for the poor people of the South and Southwest. But we can change things. George Washington secured freedom of this country with a ragged army who left bloodprints in the snow as they marched. We're in the same position today."

E. B. McKINNEY, whom Walter Moskop brought before the convention as "one of our great, a pillar of granite in a land of wilderness," was a rural Negro minister who had been preaching organization to his people for thirty-five years. Elected vice-president of the union and one of its leading organizers, he called down the planters' wrath on himself and family. One night his home in Marked Tree, Arkansas, was punctured by more than fifty bullets, his young sons wounded and two men badly shot. Fortunately McKinney was away or he would have been lynched.

"Sometimes people say that race relations are complicated," he addressed the delegates, "but that ain't so. If you are mad at me and I'm not mad at you that's not complicated."

"No, that's right," his hearers agreed.

"The Negro holds no complaint against the white croppers," he continued. "He just asks that you come along, organize and share the same risks."

OSCAR F. BLEDSOE, a large plantation owner and President of the Staple Cotton Growers' Association, with a membership of 6,700 Southern landowners who control more than half-a-million acres under cotton production, has explained: "The plantation system is a system of paternal guardianship which has existed for generations, and is predicated on the existence of a race which requires management and in turn presents a responsibility." This is the pre-Civil War language of the South's former slave-holding aristocracy. "We have cared for our Negroes and mules even when our banks failed and our lands were mortgaged. In the North, in time of stress, factories are shut down and men laid off to shift for themselves."

"We would just laugh at the idea of a union," continued the Cotton Growers' President. "We would not deal with it."

But economic facts can also speak. In recent months, Mr. Bledsoe's associates have experienced the bitter taste of swallowing their own words. Many have been forced to deal with the despised Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

But there are honest, straight-seeing men in the state of Arkansas. Strange as it may appear, two of them sit in an office at the state capitol. E. I. McKinley, Arkansas Commissioner of Labor, and H. C. Malcom, Deputy Commissioner, are union men of long standing. They have withstood pressure to "fall in line," but it is doubtful how much longer the plantation interests will allow them to remain at their posts.

In a devastating report of an investigation of some three hundred claims of Arkansas share-croppers against landlords (a report incidentally filed in Washington at Secretary Wallace's request, but which has brought no action from Washington to aid the cropper), H. C. Malcom records case

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after case of proven robbery by plantation owners of their tenants who are raising cotton for them on a supposed fifty-fifty basis. Case after case was cited of croppers who were charged 20 to 25 percent interest rates on grocery accounts at the landlord's commissary, on goods priced 75 to a 100 percent above that in other stores.

Many thousands of the one and one-half million sharecroppers in the South are being driven from the land, converted into day-laborers. Large-scale planters, especially in Texas, Oklahoma and in parts of Arkansas and Alabama are finding wage-labor rather than sharecropping a less costly and more efficient system of exploitation. Both H. L. Mitchell, secretary of the S.T.F.U., and Tom Burke, of the powerful Sharecroppers' Union of Alabama, are of the opinion that the sharecropping system is doomed and that in the near future cotton will be raised by dispossessed laborers as in Texas and Oklahoma.

The cotton pickers' and croppers' answer to their immediate problems is their union and a Farmer-Labor Party, initiated by organized labor. The convention called for the organization of such a "party of workers and farmers," which would fight child labor, establish adequate schools in the rural sections, abolish the poll tax and other devices for wholesale disenfranchisement of the Negro and all the South's working people.

MYRA PAGE.

"Work with Song"

JOSHUA KUNITZ

Moscow.

WHEN the startling news of the Stakhanov movement first appeared in the press The Neue Zurischer Zeitung exclaimed compassionately: "O easily inflamed, eternally credulous of miracles, Russian folk!" Having apparently recently discovered Dostoievsky, Soloviev and Merezhkovsky, the bourgeois writer has come to the profound and original conclusion that all Russians, regardless of place, time or class, are incorrigible mystics, ever tremulous in anticipation of a new miracle, a new dispensation, a second coming of Christ. Stakhanovism is nothing but a "new mysticism." Stakhanov himself is nothing but another Messiah, who, like all his Russian predecessors, will of course prove a pathetic fraud and delusion. Poor, innocent, eternally credulous Russian folk!

Herr Just of the Nazi Daz is lyrically indignant. According to his scrupulously objective report, Stakhanov is "the most hated man in the Soviet Union." With a lovely touch of Aryan contempt for the unprepossessing facial lineaments of Stakhanov the Slav, Herr Just writes: "He might have been a phantom, a mirage, an evil specter had not his insignificant, repulsive head with the wide mouth and thick lips been spread in millions of portraits all over the land."

Altogether, the reaction of the capitalist press to the Stakhanov movement ranges from acrimony and malice to gentle tolerance and mild scepticism. Even the unusually intelligent and relatively informed and friendly Walter Duranty of The New York Times, concludes his description of Stakhanov's original feat with this cautious qualification: "But it remains to be seen how far Stakhanovism appeals to the general mass of Soviet miner and how far it speeds up total coal production."

It remains to be seen! This from a man who has lived in the Soviet Union through the heroic period of the First Piatiletka and has witnessed almost from its inception the magnificent development of the shock brigade and socialist competition movement. To be sure, a bit of scepticism is a healthy ingredient in a reporter's psychological make-up. "Seeing is believing" is a motto especially good when one writes of Soviet accomplishments for a capitalist paper. Moreover, such reserve is advisable also because it enhances one's reputation as a wise observer. Though just why unwarranted scepticism rather than belief founded on a knowledge of social trends and processes is an indication of superior acumen is something I cannot for the life of me explain. The consensus, however, seems to be that it is so: belief in the Workers' Republic, faith in the creative powers of the Soviet masses is *a priori* naive; it is a sign of an uncritical mind, of puerile enthusiasm, or, what's a million times worse, of crude, unadulterated Soviet propaganda. It was, no doubt, in recognition of this common prejudice that Walter Duranty, who must have known better, mechanically added his touch of scepticism to an otherwise fair and accurate report.

By this time what remains to be seen is not what the Soviet miners will do, but how the gentlemen who have so persistently maligned Stakhanov and the movement he symbolizes will scramble out of the uncomfortable mess they have got into. The miners have responded to Stakhanov's example with the ardor which anybody even slightly familiar with the psychology of the revolutionary proletariat might have expected. In my last article I told how Stakhanov and his immediate friends raised the production of coal to 227 tons in one shift. A few days later Izotov, using Stakhanov's method, produced 241 tons in one shift. He was followed by Artiukhov who produced 310 tons. On the eighteenth anniversary of the October Revolution, Stepanenko, a student of Izotov, a miner now serving in the Black Sea Fleet, visited the Donbas and using the Stakhanov method produced 552 tons. On November 18, the famous miner Ivan Akimocich Borisov, in the Kuzbas produced 778 tons.

The figures grew. Before long the miner Pavlov produced 991 tons, Kharchenko 1,060, Poroshin 1,204 and finally Baranov 1,581 tons. Thus from the normal average of 7 to 14 tons a day, the pneumatic drill, operated by a skillful miner and a well-organized brigade of proppers—Stakhanovites—*raised its output to the phenomenal sum of* 1,581. And who would dare to insist that the limit has finally been reached?

But why pick only on Stakhanov? Even a cursory perusal of the Soviet press will reveal such endlessly reiterated names as Busygin, Smetanin, the Vinogradovas and Krivonos. These names do not stand for anything outside the general Stakhanov movement. Indeed, to indicate that and thus to avoid misunderstandings, the Soviet press often resorts to the hyphen: Stakhanov-Busygin, or Stakhanov-Krivonos, etc. Who are these people that are so honored as to have their names coupled with that of Stakhanov? They are workers whose achievements and influence in their respective industries—auto, shoe, textile—are comparable to those of Stakhanov in his. Each is a pioneer in his field, each is an expert, an organizer, a rationalizer, a breaker of Soviet or world records. By stamping 129 crankshafts per hour, Busygin has beaten the record of the Ford Plant. By tending 208 automatic looms, Dusia Vinogradova has thoroughly smashed the world record. By stitching 1,820 pairs of shoes, Smetanin has surpassed by more than 100 percent the best stitcher in the Bata Shoe Plant in Czechoslovakia, the best and most highly mechanized shoe factory in the world. (On December 28, Smetanin achieved a new record—2,220 pairs of shoes.)

AH, BUT these are mere stunts, the sceptics argue. These are records of giants. "Stakhanov is obviously an athlete . . . who derives a peculiar pleasure from showing his co-workers what weak fellows they are." (Berliner Tageblatt, November 13, 1935.) The records of athletes, they say, cannot possibly become standards of work in Soviet industry. There is more glitter than substance in this business.

And of course the sceptics and The Berliner Tageblatt are wrong. First, these are not records of giants. All these workers, including Stakhanov himself, are neither extraordi-

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narily big nor extraordinarily powerful. They are average, normal people, workers who have mastered their machines and the principles of organized work—efficiency. They have simply been the first to demonstrate what can be done by millions of other workers.

Secondly, the standards of work in all of Soviet industry are bound to be affected. They may not immediately reach the peaks attained by individual Stakhanovites, but that they will leap considerably upward there cannot be even a shadow of a doubt.

Indeed, they are already shooting up. At the beginning of 1935, the average daily yield of the Kuzbas mines, for instance, was 29,000 tons. As a result of the Stakhanov movement, the yield rapidly grew to about 50,000 tons daily. On November 27 last, these new mines gave the record yield of 51,007 tons and on November 29 this record was broken by a yield of over 54,000 tons—120 percent of the plan. The same thing is observable in the Donbas, where on December 7 the record quantity of 226,500 tons of coal was mined. If such work is kept up, the Soviet coal industry, until recently in danger of not carrying out the plan, will actually fulfill the Second Five Year Plan in four years!

The same thing is true of the auto industry. In the Gorky Plant, prior to the Stakhanov-Busygin movement, the monthly production of crankshafts averaged 8,000. Since September, however, the figures began to rise from 12,080 to 15,250 in October; in November—up to and including the 27—16,154. Parallel progress has been made in the production of other details, as well as in the output of complete cars. Until the Stakhanov-Busygin movement, the daily output of cars by the Gorky Plant was 148 machines in two shifts. By November 25, the number of machines produced rose to 202—108 passenger cars and 94 trucks.

The most persistent and most "devastating" criticism of Stakhanovism in the capitalist press, especially the fascist press, has been the charge of speed-up. Stakhanovism, the fascist write, is not a mass movement. It has been engineered on top and imposed on an unwilling and resentful people. On the anniversary of the October Revolution, the Nazi Bergwerkszeitung wrote:

> The workers and peasants who eighteen years ago had thought that they were rising against exploitation will discover, as soon as they return after the holidays to their machines on which they will have to work according to the Stakhanov method, omnipresent agents of the *Cheka* with loaded revolvers.

It is amusing how the fascists, these vilest exponents of inhuman exploitation of workers in their own countries, become so touchingly solicitous over the poor Soviet toiler who is bamboozled and driven to exhaustion by the tyrannical Bolsheviks with the cocked revolvers.

By what magic, by what superhuman powers, by what mysterious process, the unspeakable Bolsheviks with the loaded revolvers manage to have the individual workers speed up his work by three hundred, five hundred or even a thousand and more percent, the fascist gentlemen do not say. Yet it should be clear even to a child that no amount of force or persuasion or inducement could effect such tremendous increase in man's physical possibilities for speeding up. Obviously, such increase derives not from physical speed-up, but from better organization of work. Stakhanov does not work harder now than when he produced only seven tons of coal per shift. On the contrary, he works more easily. His work is more rhythmic, steadier, smoother, much less exhausting. The experience of every Stakhanovite I have spoken to or read about confirms this. They all speak of their studies, of their social work, of their new cultural interests, of the joy they find in their accomplishments. People who are sweated to the bone under the threat of violence do not talk or behave that way. The essence of Stakhanovism is not speed-up, it is better, more rational, more efficient organization of work.

However, to the fascists, Stakhanovism does not only mean speed-up. It also means the dreadful consequences of speed-up: lowering of wages, unemployment and mass resentment. On November 9, The Deutsche Algemeine Zeitung informed its readers that

> since 1928 wages of industrial workers in the Soviet Union have been reduced by at least eighty percent.

On November 6, The Kreutz Zeitung wrote that Stakhanovism meant ten times as much work for the same low wages. On November 12, The Rheinische Westfalische Zeitung divulged the existence of a secret decree "designed to preclude the possibility of the progressive increase of wages to the Stakhanovites." The same paper also published the sensational and very authentic news that "everywhere in the Soviet Union there are now lay-offs and discharges . . . unemployment is growing." To complete the picture of horrors, the scrupulous reporters in the capitalist press took three or four isolated cases of violence against three or four Stakhanovites, perpetrated by some personal enemies or backward and misguided peasant-workers and inflated them into an expression of widespread mass revolt.

To anyone living in the Soviet Union in constant association with the Soviet workers, all these charges are so utterly absurd that one is inclined to dismiss them with a shrug of the shoulder. For the most part these charges are motivated by fear, envy and malice. It obviously would not do for the fascist scribes in and out of Germany to tell the underpaid and unemployed workers in their own countries that wages in the Soviet Union are growing at a dizzy rate and that the curse of unemployment has been forever removed. It would not help the peace of mind of the Ruhr or Alsace Lorraine or Pennsylvania or Wales mine owners to have their workers know the wage trend in the Soviet coal industry. The Central Irmino mine in which Stakhanov works offers a typical example. Before the Stakhanov movement there were practically no miners there who earned as much as a thousand rubles a month. In September there were ten who earned a thousand rubles or more. In October there were already fifty. In November there were over one hundred, some miners earning as much as 1,500 rubles.

But without minimizing the importance of wages as an incentive toward increased productivity, especially now that the ruble has gained real purchasing power, we must nonetheless bear in mind that Stakhanovism is something specifically Soviet, something quite inconceivable in capitalist countries, has other incomparably more potent mainsprings. Stakhanovism cannot be even remotely understood without some appreciation of its psychological background and the social forces that have generated it. Stakhanovism has not come out of a clear sky—it is inherent in Socialism, in Communism. Stakhanov had thousands of forerunners. The movement which goes under his name had begun with the revolution, with the *subbotniks*. Lenin, though he did not know it by name, knew and prophesied that in the workers' struggle for Communism the very thing now known as Stakhanovism must needs emerge.

> Communism means a higher labor productivity, as compared with that of capitalism, on the part of voluntary, conscious, united workers employing progressive technique. . . . Communism begins where the rank and file workers, overcoming arduous toil, display self-sacrificing concern for increasing labor productivity. . . .

In this characterization of the Communist attitude to work, Lenin foretold the essence of the Stakhanov movement. For Stakhanovism is precisely this: the self-sacrificing determination of the *rank-and-file* workers to squeeze everything possible out of their machines and thus to excel the productivity of labor attained in the most advanced capitalist countries.

Take Busygin of the Gorky Auto Works. Like Stakhanov, he was an illiterate peasant. In 1931 he made hundreds of miles on foot from his foresaken little Vetluga village to the city of Gorky—where the now famous Auto Works were then being built. He was a carpenter until the works were completed. Then, with thousands of other builders, he remained in the plant. His first job was that of greaser in the forge shop. While lubricating the monster steam hammer, he was fascinated by their beautiful complexity and power. He loved to watch them work. This peasant had an inexhaustible fund of curiosity and a modern new plant provided plenty of objects to be curious about. He asked endless questions which some of the workers were patient enough to answer. Before long he learned how to work on the forge. He was made an apprentice.

> I developed the habit of watching attentively how the others worked and to wonder if they

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were doing it correctly, and how I would do the job in their place. There was one case when one of the blacksmiths worked badly. I looked closely, thought how to set up the detail better, and began to work myself. My work turned out better and there was almost no waste. The foreman even was surprised: "How long we have been tormenting ourselves with this detail, and you make it so well."

They began to shift Busygin from one kind of work to another and everywhere he exceeded the norms. The news of Stakhanov's accomplishment simply accelerated a process that had already been manifesting itself in Busygin's work. Independently, Busygin in the Gorky Plant had been struggling for a more rational organization of work. He encountered the obtuseness of his chiefs; but he fought and he won. Once he insisted that he be permitted to work on the same detail for a reasonable length of time. He maintained that that would be the most effective way of further increasing the productivity of his work. The chief of his department would not hear of it. When Busygin became too insistent, he was fired for insubordination. Later the chief was fired and Busygin was reinstated.

The mere suggestion of "speed up" evokes a hearty laughter from Busygin and an exclamation which is the equivalent of the American "The bunk!" "It is a remarkable thing," he declared at the Congress of the Stakhanovites, "the better one works, the less tired one is. The more smoothly and efficiently the work proceeds, the healthier and stronger one feels. . . . We shall work with song!"

Could anyone not completely depraved, could anyone but a corrupt hireling of the capitalists suggest that these are the words of a speed-up victim? Could anyone even slightly concerned over man's progress fail to respond to Busygin's story:

I look back at my past life, and to this day I cannot believe that it has all been actual fact instead of something in a fairy tale. Why, before September I had never been in a city outside of Gorki, and I was very seldom in that city, as I lived at the auto plant. I only went to the cinema and our theater.

"I am a Communist," said Krivonos when I interviewed him, "and it is my duty not only to work well myself, but to teach others to work well."

And here is his own description of the memorable occasion when he was given the Order of Lenin:

"On August 9, there was a celebration in Slaviansk in honor of the best shock-brigaders —the *otlichniks*. I was in the auditorium. When the chief of the Political Department, Comrade Stepanov, got up and read the decision of the Central Executive Committee of the government to bestow the Order of Lenin upon me, the old machinists, once my bitterest critics, rushed over to me, grabbed me in their arms, lifted me into the air and loudly crying hurrah, carried me to the stage.

"The audience, too, was shouting:

"'Invite his father into the presiding committee! Invite his father! Invite his wife!'

"My entire family were given places of honor at the table of the presiding committee. Girls were throwing flowers at me. There were so many flowers that the whole table was piled up with them. The local poets recited their verses glorifying 'the best machinist.'

"People spoke warmly, feelingly. The grey-haired Makar Vasilievich Ruban spoke for the older generation of machinists.

"'You, Petro, have surpassed us,' he said, 'but we don't begrudge you. Youth should forge ahead. Forge ahead, my boy, always forge ahead. Don't stop. . . .'"

It cannot be too strongly emphasized: The Stakhanov movement is not anything imposed on the working masses from the top—it is a spontaneous movement initiated by the workers themselves, in different industries, in different parts of the country, by different people almost simultaneously. One can cite innumerable instances. Nicholas Smetanin, the leading Stakhanovite in the shoe industry, had won fame for himself and his brigade as far back as 1932. Dusia Vinagradova, the renowned textile worker, who now tends 208 looms, had begun her struggle for greater efficiency and high productivity as soon as she stepped into the factory from the school bench in 1931. She began to work on four looms. That did not satisfy her. She then took on sixteen looms and that was not enough. Before long she decided to try twenty-six; after a little while that too proved too easy. She transferred to thirty-five looms and then to fifty-two. Other workers in the factory followed her example.

The campaign which was developed around Stakhanov only brought together and crystallized into a movement the experiences of thousands of innovators in every field of endeavor. In my previous article I showed how something quite similar to the Stakhanovism had taken place in argriculture. Improved organization and higher productivity of labor was a universal trend. The Stakhanov campaign, by popularizing individual achievements and experiences, by heaping honors upon the most distinguished workers, by advertising the phenomenal earnings, by inviting them to Moscow to meet and discuss the problems of industry with the leaders of the government and the Communist Party, transmuted this trend among the vanguard into a *genuine mass movement* for efficiency, organization and skill.

"Mercy" For a Mercy-Slayer

MARY MITCHELL

THE case of "The People Against Dorothy Sherwood," sentenced to die in the electric chair for the drowning of her two-year-old son, Jimmy, was officially won at Newburg, N. Y., on Jan. 18, 1936, but it was an ironic victory. The real case against her began when she was born.

Until the time she was nine years old, she had nothing to do but wait on an invalid mother. But when her mother, the third of her father's six wives, died, the security of a permanent home vanished forever. Each time her father remarried, he sent for Dorothy, but since none of his marriages lasted for more than three or four months, she was soon packed off again.

She was packed off, in turn, to twenty different states, to earn her board in strange homes, by scrubbing floors, caring for children and doing general housework. During all her childhood, she stayed only once in the same place for an entire school term. But the fifteen months in an orphanage, where she had to go without shoes and wash, dress and feed all the other children, were a trifle short of unmixed bliss.

When she was sixteen, she ran away to join the Salvation Army. Refused at that pious group's training school for officers, she picked up whatever odd jobs offered—wrapper in a department store, cashier in a cafeteria. Her spare time she devoted to volunteer work for the Salvation Army, passing the plate for pennies, selling The War Cry, doing housework for officers.

One day she saw an ad in the paper for "showgirls, no experience needed." She applied and was accepted as a chorine in a travelling burlesque show. Playing one-night stands in tank towns around the country, she met and married Fred Sherwood, motion picture operator.

She was nineteen then; out of their joyless union emerged two children, Dotty, now seven and little Jimmy.

With her husband, she continued the pillar-to-post existence to which she had grown so accustomed, for he seemed incapable of holding a job more than six months at a margin time. Finally, he could get no job at all and little Dotty was sent to his mother's to live. The rest of the family went on relief. In the spring of 1934, they found that Fred had tuberculosis and he was sent to a sanitarium, where he died a year later.

After that, the young widow and her baby struggled along on the few dollars she was able to pick up working as waitress or cashier in local restaurants and lunch wagons. At one of these, she met an ex-prohibtion agent, who scraped up an acquaintance by admiring Jimmy. He told her he was a G-man and that he would take her to California and provide a home for her and

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(The cartoons on this page are the only ones in the contest. No additional ones will be printed, so you can enter the contest now.)

—RULES—

1. Anyone (except employees of the New Masses or their families) is eligible to enter this title contest.

2. The contest opened January 23. Titles must be received at the New Masses Contest Dept., Box 76, Madison Square Station, New York, N. Y., on or before April 15, 1936. Awards will be made as soon after the end of the contest as the titles can be considered by the judges.

3. You need not use the attached coupon, although it is most convenient, but in order to be eligible in the Title Contest, your subscription for 10 weeks for the New Masses with $1, the subscription price, must accompany the titles you submit.

4. In case of a tie of two or more, then the judges will ask for a competitive twenty-five-word descriptive essay on the three cartoons. Their decision on the essays will be final.

5. All contest entries will be acknowledged as received.

6. The title winners, by acceptance of the prizes, unconditionaly transfer to the New Masses all rights to the winning titles.

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Cartoon No. 2

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What Some Contest-ants Would Do With $1,000.00

W. S., New York, writes: "As one who has never won a prize at any time, it would take me several weeks to get over the shock if I received the first prize, but I would still have enough balance left to renew my subscription to The New Masses for several years to come."

F. R., another contestant, wrote: "Winning one of the larger prizes in your contest would enable me to continue going through school. However, those of us who miss the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow, so to speak, will still have the Gold at the masthead."

Write us what YOU *would do if your titles won one of the prizes for you.*

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Surely you can think of titles that fit the fine cartoons printed on this page. Send them in with a $1-10 weeks' subcription and you too will have a chance of winning one of the $1,500 prizes. But please remember the special 10-weeks-for-$1 subscription to the New Masses is open *only* to contest entrants. The regular subscription price is $1.25 for three months.

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Jimmy. He told her he would send Jimmy to military school and college.

He told her plenty, but he never showed up. On August 20, 1935, he hadn't shown up and she knew at last that he never would. Her landlady told her to pay up her back rent or get out. And take Jimmy with her. She tried the last two job possibilities she knew of. Both failed.

She went home then and got Jimmy and put him in his little "stroller" and wheeled him three and a half miles to Moodna Creek. She let him play in the shallow water till he was tired. Then she drowned him. She had to hold his head under water for thirty minutes, for the water was only eight inches deep and he was a sturdy little boy and he did not want to die.

When he was quite dead, she took off his wet clothes and dressed him in dry garments she had brought along. She sat on a log and held him in her arms for a long time. Then she walked out to the main road, hitched a ride from a passing truck and went to the police station, the tiny corpse in her arms.

"Here he is," she said to the police lieutenant in an unimpassioned monotone. "I killed him. I couldn't take care of him any longer and I thought he'd be better off dead."

Driven insane by her hopeless battle against poverty and starvation, she committed this crime "to insure Jimmy against suffering," her attorney told the jury, as he pleaded with them for mercy for his client.

And the jury rose to the occasion.

"We find the defendant guilty of murder in the first degree," said the foreman, but, he added, "with a recommendation of mercy."

It took the youngest juror five hours of argument to convince his sterner-minded colleagues to tack on this chivalrous phrase. He could have spared himself the trouble. Their verdict made the death sentence mandatory and the "mercy recommendation" amounted to handing her a silk cushion to sit on in the electric chair.

Her attorney, assigned her by the court, did his best. His, too, was a losing fight, for his opponent was the brilliant prosecutor, District Attorney Henry Hirschberg.

Only once before in the history of Orange County had a woman been tried there for first-degree murder. That was Mrs. Lucy Early, accused eight years ago of the arsenic poisoning of her husband. She was defended by this same Hirschberg.

It took a jury five minutes to acquit her.

This case was different, said Mr. Hirschberg after the trial. Had he defended Mrs. Sherwood, he figures it would have taken the jury two hours to acquit her.

But none of that is realized by the ghastly pale, dry-eyed emotionless woman who must die for cheating a system she doesn't understand and never heard of. She must die because she killed her son when she became convinced there was not one chance in a billion for him to achieve self-respect, happiness or enough to eat. The system was outraged. It has other plans for its Jimmys.

Correspondence

For James Branch Cabell

To The New Masses:

I have just read the pathetic, threadbare little note which Mr. James Branch Cabell, late of Poictesme, sent in answer to Angel Flores' questionaire.

May I through your columns express to Mr. Cabell my condolences on his literary demise, and extend to him my congratulations on the very appropriate epitaph he has written for himself.

Sonia Toline.

Eddie Cantor's Contest

To The New Masses:

No doubt your attention has been called to the essay contest being sponsored by Eddie Cantor on the subject "How Can America Stay Out of War?" Cantor vigorously states that he is an ardent pacifist, and is merely seeking to do for some poor unfortunate that which never befell his way, viz., the completion of a scholastic education by attending college. The contest will draw the attention of thousands of students who were unable to attend or finish their college education.

It is my suggestion to Mr. Cantor, be he really sincere in his anti-war sentiments, to inform himself of the activities of the American League Against War and Fascism, and instead of conducting a contest supported by the Hearst press, he donate his five thousand dollars outright to the above organization and win the respect of thousands of *real* anti-war supporters.

Nevio J. Manzani.

Los Angeles, California.

Frame Up: New Style

To The New Masses:

Just as Elsie Monokian, chairman of the Mays strikers, was leaving her house on January 28, the telephone rang. A male voice on the other end of the wire said, "You people on strike against Mays might be interested in something I have. I'd sort of like to help you out. I've got letters that prove that a girl and a fellow are selling you out to the boss—giving information on you. Would you like to have them?"

Miss Monokian hesitated. "If I could take a look at them—"

"No," said the voice. "I can't really do that—except if you'll meet me in front of the Western Union office at the Long Island Railway Depot. That's Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn. I'll be there at one-thirty sharp—you'll know the man I'm with. Only don't tell anybody about it—"

In the interval Miss Monokian consulted with other members of the union. Finally it was decided that she would meet the informer at the station—but that two other union members would accompany her and sit in the waiting room while she talked to whomever might appear.

At one thirty-five a Western Union messenger boy arrived. "Are you Elsie?" he asked. "Yes." "A man gave me this package to hand you," he remarked, passing her a wrapped box with a note on it saying: "In this box are twenty-four photostatic copies of letters. Don't open until three o'clock, because the letters are still wet and must dry. Proceed to strike headquarters and Mr. Bershod [a friend of the strikers] will meet you there at two-thirty. Destroy this note immediately because the writing may be recognized and names should not be mentioned."

Miss Monokian joined her companions and left the station. A few blocks away they were stopped by two plainclothesmen, who shoved them into the doorway. "What you got in that package?" they wanted to know. "Letters," one answered. "Like hell," bellowed the plainclothesman. "That's a bomb. **Open it up.**"

They opened the box. Inside was a bottle of valerium—or in ordinary terms, a stink bomb. The three strikers were arrested, charged with possession of a stench bomb, a charge that carries with it a maximum penalty of one year's imprisonment.

District Attorney Geoghan, after he had examined the messenger boy, admitted that in all probability this was a frame-up. Even Magistrate Katz, before whom the three were arraigned, declared that this sounded more like a "practical joke" than a serious charge. But the three will be tried. Every effort, every pressure has been made to break the Mays strike, to intimidate the picket line, to scare inexperienced workers by mass arrests. The newest trick is another weapon in the hands of the Mays management to get rid of militant strikers—the methods used do not seem to matter. The frame-up can be stopped by immediate protest to District Attorney Geoghan, Kings County, Brooklyn.

Elsie Monokian,
Bernard Entin,
Brooklyn, N. Y. Jack Small.

Happy Days Are Here Again

Prosperity is indeed returning by leaps and bounds. On every side we hear it—new highs of production, greater profits, resumed dividends, etc.; why, it is even felt on the garbage dumps! In an editorial, "The Public Feeding Grounds," the Englewood (N. J.) News says that the city police report that about a hundred families every week, along with homeless cats and dogs, go to the dump for food.

"Huge chunks of meat discarded by the various butcher shops are taken home, washed and cooked by the desperately poor people. People are seen daily looking for all kinds of clothing and wearing apparel, and splinters of wood for their stoves." All this in Englewood, the millionaire suburb that was the home of the late Dwight Morrow.

"Omar."

What, No Santy Claus?

I am a good American mechanic, but now I am only a W.P.A. worker. The other day it was raining and we had to build a shed. It took a short time, and then we had some time to talk. Some of the bunch said, shivering, well, at least this is better than nothing. There's always been depressions, they went away, and so will this one. They can't shake their beliefs in Santa Claus, but how much more dough has he got in that sack? It looks thinner and thinner to me, and I ask, what will happen after the elections? I'm for a Farmer-Labor Party, now and here.

Elmer Adams.

Letters in Brief

The Secretary of the American Youth Congress asks that all unaffiliated youth organizations send delegates to a city-wide conference February 15, at the Union Methodist Episcopal Church, 229 West 48th Street, New York City. Outstanding figures will discuss the National Youth Administration and the American Youth Act now pending in Congress.

Ross Hoffman writes us from Boston about the activities of the Workers School there. Among the courses offered for the coming term are "Principles of Communism, Marxism-Leninism, American History, Political Economy, etc."

Another New Masses reader, H. Dieter, sends us details about the Workers School in Philadelphia, whose next session begins on February 17. He informs us that Carl Reeve, who has contributed to The New Masses, is the new director of the school.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Eliot In Our Time

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF T. S. ELIOT, by F. O. Matthiessen. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.25.

MR. ELIOT'S achievement is considerable enough to deserve the careful, intelligent, and resourceful treatment that Professor Matthiessen has given it. If one were to judge Eliot only by his influence on his contemporaries, one would have to regard him as an important figure, certain of a place in literary history. But he has been not merely a stimulus to poets but also a satisfaction to readers, including some readers well over on the left. For more than one radical, indeed, Eliot is almost the only modern poet who will bear re-reading. Why this is true Mr. Matthiessen helps to explain, and in giving his explanation he has made so many significant comments on the nature of poetry that his book immediately takes a prominent place among the critical works of our time.

The book is important in spite of what I regard as Mr. Matthiessen's confusion on the interminably and inconclusively debated topic of form and content. At times he seems to take a firm position with the formalists. At the outset, for example, he laments "the increasing tendency to treat poetry as a social document and to forget that it is an art," and says that the one quality that gives a poet's work permanence is "his quality as an artist." Later on he observes that what makes Rivera great is "the complete mastery of the demands of his form."

Yet Mr. Matthiessen also points out, "That does not mean that either the poem or the poet can be separated from the society that produced them, or that a work of art does not inevitably both reflect and illuminate its age. Nor does it imply that a poet is necessarily lacking in ideas, or that the content of his work, the material he chooses to write about, and the interpretation he makes of it, is without cardinal significance in determining his relation to life and to the currents of thought in his time." And, as a matter of fact, Mr. Matthiessen devotes much of his attention to Eliot's ideas and their relation to the life of our times.

In short, Mr. Matthiessen very properly regards both form and content as important. What disturbs me is that he fails to investigate the relation of the two. He says shrewd things about both, but he talks about them separately.

It is this lapse, I believe, that makes Mr. Matthiessen unduly hostile to what he calls sociological criticism. Every critic, no matter how far to the left, acknowledges, even if he sometimes appears to forget, that there is no ideological equivalent for a poem. He also knows that there is a difference between good expression and bad expression. But what some of us hold is that a thing well expressed and a thing badly expressed are two different things. If two men paint the same landscape, and one painting is a masterpiece and the other a collection of daubs, the difference is not wholly in form. There is also a difference in content, not in the actual physical content of the landscape, of course, but in the mental content, so to speak—in what the two men perceived.

For us, therefore, the problem is not so simple as it is for Mr. Matthiessen. He can always dismiss a difficult question by talking about the poet's quality as an artist or his mastery of form. We, however, cannot separate artistic quality and formal mastery from the poet's perceptions and even, if he has any, his ideas. That it requires great talent and long apprenticeship for the expression of any perception, even a simple one, we do not deny, and we do not willingly overlook the intricacies of the process. But we cannot forget that the perception and the expression must always be examined together, for we are certain that they are integrated in the actual functioning of the poet.

It would be extravagant to try to define, in the space of a review, the interrelation of perception and expression, but the existence of that interrelation ought to be obvious. For this reason, I am unwilling to accept Mr. Matthiessen's phrases about artistry. I think Eliot is important because he says something. That "something," I will repeat, cannot be reduced to ideas. The way he says it, I will add, is important. But the way he says his "something" is part of what he says. The form of his verse, in other words, is in large measure determined by the subtlety of his perceptions, and his artistic mastery in no small degree lies in his understanding of their demands.

What Eliot has to say is obviously concerned with the present mood of the bourgeois intelligentsia. I need not apologize for regarding that mood as important. It grows, as Mr. Matthiessen admirably shows, out of conditions that affect us all. It is a mood that most revolutionary intellectuals have felt and perhaps, at some moments and to some extent, still feel. It is a mood that even those who have never felt it or have completely overcome it have to reckon with. Eliot registers that mood in a hundred phrases, as it enters into personal and political relationships, as it affects education, science, religion, history. "What gives authority to the interpretation of life emerging from both his poetry and prose," Matthiessen says, "is the fact that it is authentic that it corresponds closely not to any preconceived standard of what he ought to think and believe, but to what he has actually felt and understood by listening to himself, by studying the deepest elements in his nature." What he has found in himself is not unique; it is different in degree but not in kind from what many of his contemporaries have found in themselves. His poetry is representative, not because it states some familiar idea, but because it expresses what a representative man thinks, feels, is. That is why it is illuminating, enriching, and in a sense emancipating.

But this is for the most part true only of the poetry Eliot had written by 1925. Mr. Matthiessen, defending *Ash Wednesday* and the later poems, quotes Allen Tate: "The reasoning that is being brought to bear upon Mr. Eliot's recent verse is as follows: Anglo-Catholicism would not at all satisfy me; therefore, his poetry declines under its influence." This, I must say, with all deference to Mr. Matthiessen, is nonsense. Some critics may have argued that, since Anglo-Catholicism is intellectually untenable, an adoption of this faith argues a relaxation of integrity that is bound to be reflected, sooner or later, in the poet's work. But even such *a priori* judgments, though probably sound, are unnecessary. Mr. Matthiessen knows well enough that *Ash Wednesday* has not spoken to Eliot's contemporaries as *Gerontion* did, and that there is small likelihood that phrases of *The Journey of the Magi* will enter, as did phrases of *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,* into our daily speech. He himself, after tenaciously defending the later poems, admits that "they do not give expression to so fully packed a range of experience," though he tries to cover up his admission by rebuking the sociological critics for expecting an artist's career to be plotted on a steadily rising curve.

Mr. Matthiessen, indeed, seems to find himself placed in a rather uncomfortable position by his hero's Anglo-Catholicism. He admits that, when a poet has ideas, as Eliot does, they are important, and he does not quite like to put himself on record as saying that it makes no difference to the resulting poetry if the ideas are pure nonsense. But he will not make the effort to analyze Eliot's religious and political theories. He says of *Triumphal March,* quite rightly that it is not a Fascist poem, but he gives himself away when he adds, "I am not here concerned with the direct applicability of Eliot's ideas." If he were, he would realize

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that the ideas are not directly applicable; in the modern world they could not possibly be; but some one might try to apply them, and the attempt would give the strongest support, whether Eliot liked it or not, to fascism.

It is Mr. Matthiessen's overemphasis on form, or at least his failure to clarify the relation between perception and expression, that has resulted in his evaluating Eliot's later poems—against his own better judgment, I feel—so highly. He has approached Eliot's later work from only one side, and so he has failed to understand its significance. He appreciates the great technical ingenuity of these poems, but he does not see that this ingenuity is functionless, or, rather that its function is to conceal a lack of perception. Expression is communication, and Eliot is saying less and less to fewer and fewer persons.

Eliot once spoke to many men, saying to them and for them what needed to be said. To say that the mood he expressed was negative is not to dismiss it nor to minimize the poetry that grew out of it. But major poets have seldom been satisfied with negation, nor indeed with any single mood. Growth, as Mr. Matthiessen insists, does not follow a regular curve, but change does take place. Where, we asked after *The Hollow Men*, will Eliot go? He went towards an irrelevant philosophy and a dangerous politics. At the same time his poetry lost breadth, subtlety and strength as well as pertinence and influence. Are we justified in believing that he reached the inevitable crossroads and took the wrong turning? Mr. Matthiessen thinks not, but the evidence of much of his own book is against him.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Tragi-Comedy

SAWDUST CAESAR, by George Seldes. Harper and Bros. $3.

GENERAL CHARLES H. SHERRILL, American member of the International Olympics Committee and one of the leading spokesmen for fascism in the United States since 1920, is only one of dozens who have written glowing eulogies of Mussolini. Sherrill once went on a pilgrimage to Predappio, Mussolini's birthplace, and after describing the room in which "Benito the babe" was born said in ecstasy: "Of course, it gives you a thrill to stand in that room." In dozens of magazine articles and in two or three books General Sherill has propagandized for fascism and for Mussolini, one of its founders. Many Americans no doubt are today entirely uninformed about the true nature of Italian fascism and of the true character of Mussolini because of the writings of Sherrill and the others like him.

George Seldes in his latest book *Sawdust Caesar* brings us an entirely different picture of fascism and of Mussolini. Seldes was a newspaper correspondent in Italy several years during the first years of fascism. He cabled out the story of how Il Duce's secret police murdered Giacomo Matteotti, an honest and powerful opponent of fascism, and because of this story was driven from Italy. Over the past fifteen years Mr. Seldes has been gathering the material for his book. A lot of it he had the good sense to send out of Italy while he was there as a correspondent; much of it has been sent to him by foreign correspondents who are now there.

In *Sawdust Caesar* we learn that Mussolini has always been for sale to the highest bidder. Within four days between the twenty-first and the twenty-fifth of September, 1914, he changed from a violent opponent of the Allies to an open advocate of the Allied cause. He was paid his price as Seldes shows. At several other periods in his career Mussolini put himself on the block and tried to auction himself off. Shortly after the war he offered his services to the workers who had occupied Italian factories and who were making those factories hum busily for the first time in years. Benito was going to give them "protection" in true racketeer fashion. The workers not only refused to buy him but they told him they wouldn't have him as a gift. Then he sold himself to the Italian big business men. Early in his career as a fascist he had a blustering quarrel with his employers but when they kept building fascism without him he quickly "came to his milk" and from that time on rendered unquestioning loyalty to the manufacturing and financial interests who backed the Black Shirt movement.

Seldes shows that Mussolini was not the brave soldier that his admirers claim him to have been—he received his wounds in a dugout when a bomb exploded in the hands of a fellow-soldier. He did not lead the March on Rome; he came by a train after he had been invited by the King. He did not save Italy from Bolshevism. This myth has been created in recent years in order to win support for Italian fascism among the ruling classes in every capitalist country. Matteotti, the most influential anti-fascist member of Parliament, said on the floor of that body on September 20, 1920: "I see by your own admission that 'Bolshevism is dead' and now you declare that the chief object of your party is to fight Bolshevism—you would not whip a corpse, would you?" Then he went on to taunt him further: "How do you explain that fascism, playing the adulteress, has passed from the bed of the working class to the bed of the capitalist class. . . ?" Mussolini did not restore the economic health of Italy. He did nothing for the working class of Italy except to reduce it to the lowest standard of living in the world. Every move he has ever made has been at the expense of the Italian common people.

Sawdust Caesar was originally sold to a London publisher who prepared the manuscript for publication in 1932. A note from the foreign office caused the suppression of the book. England didn't want to offend Benito. It was banned in France for a like reason. But with Mussolini's rape of Ethiopia (because of which fifty-four nations pronounced fascist Italy outlaw) things have changed. The ban has been removed in England, although it has not yet been taken off in France.

Mr. Seldes expresses fear that fascism is growing in this country. In *Sawdust Caesar* there is a lot of important ammunition for combatting its growth. But after all 450 pages of solid reading matter is a lot for the average American to dig through. As this reviewer read his copy he marked passages which could be assembled into excellent pamphlets. One could be made for circulation among American Federation of Labor unions on the bloody end of trade unions and trade unionists in fascist Italy. Pamphlets could also be made for circulation among other special groups of Americans—fraternal, church, parliamentarians, etc. Perhaps one could be made on how the fascist movement in Italy was built and guided by industrialists, bankers and the military caste.

Mr. Seldes seems to lean over backward in trying to avoid any charge of partisanship in writing this book. In two or three places he drags in the Soviet Union (without explaining the difference in purpose of the two dictatorships) and takes cracks at it in order to show, perhaps, that he is "agin injustice" anyplace and anytime. However, one has no difficulty in understanding that George Seldes is partisan. He loathes fascism and General Sherrill's "world hero." *Sawdust Caesar* is an extremely important book which everyone should read in order to get an idea of what things will be like in America "If It Does Happen Here."

WALTER WILSON.

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Working Knowledge

A HANDBOOK OF MARXISM, edited by Emile Burns. Regular Edition. Random House. $3. Popular Edition. International Publishers. $1.75.

THE title of this book is indicative of the nature of Marxism which conceives of itself and is, to those who accept it, a body of working knowledge The book is no mere "outline" upon which a reader may gaze, uninvolved, from a distance. It is no mere "treasury" into which the reader may dip to adorn his mind; although the book does give the first clear outlines to the material usually blurred in what are called "the social sciences"; and it contains more treasure for the well-being of humanity than any similar body of literature that might be assembled. However, the primary characteristic of the book is that it presents working knowledge. Those who come to it with the usual passivity of the reader will be jolted by it. They will find it disturbing, in the pressure it exerts upon them to come to decisions, in its uncompromising logic and the equally uncompromising manner of its presentation. Accustomed to the eternal balancing of alternatives and the eternal postponement of solutions which has become the procedure of polite thinking and, as a consequence of which, to reach a conclusion is regarded as an act of intellectual bad taste, this decisive, scientifically formulated program of action will seem to such readers brutal in its directness and clarity.

In its eleven hundred closely but clearly-printed pages it contains the whole of the Communist Manifesto, selections from the principal works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and the whole of the Program of the Communist International, which is, in a sense, a restatement of the Communist Manifesto in relationship to the development of Imperialism.

I have already mentioned that this is to be considered primarily a body of working knowledge. It was so in the lives of its creators. Marxism-Leninism is not the product of scholars or of men in retirement but of men active in the revolutionary struggle. Their works were written in the midst of continuous political activity; and in their lives theory and practice were never apart. Marx, for most of his life, was a political exile; Engels fought on the barricades. Both Marx and Engels were in constant touch with the labor movement. They were the founders and leaders in the International Workingmen's Association, the "First International." After Marx's death Engels completed the second and third volume of *Das Kapital* from Marx's notes and, as the most authoritative Marxist, continued to guide the advancing labor movements in a number of countries. Lenin and Stalin had even more dramatic revolutionary careers as suited the more sinister conditions in Russia and a period of proletarian upheavals. Both had their leisure behind prison bars; both lived many years in exile, Lenin abroad, Stalin in Siberia.

The role of Lenin and Stalin in the first great Socialist revolution in history could have been forecast in their earliest writings and activities. By the time of Engels' death in 1895—Marx had died in 1883—there had already come in the compromising and revisionist tendencies which turned large sections of the Socialist movement into opportunist political parties and instruments for reform within capitalism rather than instruments for revolution. As part of the process the literary work of Marx and Engels was corrupted by deliberate falsification in the editing and was generally sabotaged. Complete and untampered texts have been published only in recent years.

Lenin led in the work of purifying Socialist theory and purging the revolutionary party. His campaign for a disciplined party poised for revolutionary action and for a clear and undeviating ideology split the Russian Social Democratic Party; but, it gave Russia a party capable of accomplishing a Socialist Revolution and constructing a Socialist state. In this work, Stalin was Lenin's most consistent collaborator. Long before the October revolution the joint work of these two great men had begun, and the consistent and unswerving Marxism of Stalin is quite as remarkable as that of Lenin.

The writings of these four masters form so integrated a whole that it would be difficult without study to isolate the essentials in the contributions of each. In this, as in other ways, Marxism shares the characteristics of other sciences, that it is a unified and continuous structure. It is this continuity and consistency of thought that will, perhaps make the next deepest impression upon the reader.

Engels paid tribute to the man whom he acknowledged as master in the following terms:

> I cannot deny that both before and during my forty years' collaboration with Marx I had a certain independent share in laying the formulations, and more particularly in elaborating the theory. But the greater part of its leading basic principles, particularly in the realm of economics and history, and, above all, its final clear formulation, belong to Marx . . . Marx was a genius; we others were at best talented. Without him the theory would not be what it is today. It therefore rightly bears his name.

In turn, it may be said of Engels that he was the most lucid expositor of Marxism and that he made important special contributions in applying dialectics to broader fields. The brilliance of his achievement may be seen in the two of his works in this field available in English, his *Anti-Duhring* and his book *The Family*.

The adaptation of the Marxian analysis to the era of Imperialism, the exposure of the role of finance-capitalism as the dominant power in national and international politics is usually spoken of as Lenin's leading contribution. Lenin, however, carried his analysis further. The epoch of Imperialism is the final stage of capitalism and, therefore, it is also the epoch of proletarian revolutions. It becomes all the more important, therefore, to make of the Party the conscious leader of the proletariat and the instrument of the revolution. In his writings, therefore, I was even more impressed by his unremitting interest in revolutionary tactics, his use of every suggestion made by Marx on this subject, his concept of the role of the Party as the rigorously chosen and rigorously trained cadres acting as the general staff of the proletariat in the class war and as the instrument for revolution. From the very beginning of his revolutionary activity Lenin made it his primary task both in writing and action to develop a party picked and trained for the function of revolutionary leadership among the masses; and the problems he dealt with were those of revolutionary strategy and tactics, not only in a revolutionary situation but in all situations. His analysis, for instance, of the situation in Russia written immediately after his arrival in Petrograd in the middle of April, 1917, is astounding in its cold clarity, and reads like that of a historian writing *after* the event; but equally brilliant is his analysis of tactics in situations where there are no revolutionary crises, in his book, *Left-Wing Communism*. Lenin's application is independent but he goes for his principles to Marx who showed in his book, *The Class Struggle in France*, in his comments on the Paris Commune and elsewhere, a keen interest and a complete understanding of revolutionary tactics.

Stalin made an important contribution in the development of Lenin's solution of the question of nationalities. As a Georgian, a member of one of the oppressed nationalities in that "prison of nations," Czarist Russia, he was well suited to carry out Lenin's policy. In his book on this subject, written in 1912, Stalin laid the basis of the work he

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I am sorrier than I can tell that it is impossible to arrange a meeting in behalf of the Vermont marble workers at a time when I could attend. . . . The struggle against Fascism is to be won wherever workers are exploited. It is to be won by men who are bold to organize in their own behalf. . . . Success to your meeting! Sincerely yours, NORMAN THOMAS.

I want to assure your meeting that the Rutland marble workers are a truly noble group and worthy of every help. SINCLAIR LEWIS.

The struggle of the Vermont marble workers belongs in the great tradition of their state's history. The ancient fight for liberty and democracy which gave Vermont its integrity is now theirs. It would be fortunate if we could say that fight was ours as well. ARCHIBALD MACLEISH.

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subsequently carried out as the first Commissar of Nationalities. That the U.S.S.R. is so firmly united a federation of Socialist *nations* was therefore largely due to Stalin's intimate understanding of this question. The Leninist solution he supplied, satisfied simultaneously the demands of more than a hundred nations for cultural autonomy, economic advancement and national security. This solution is of world importance for in the Soviet Union we have a model of what the world nation will be when, at last, political frontiers between nations have been obliterated, their economic relationships have been freed from the injustices and inequalities of capitalist Imperialist exploitation and the universal brotherhood of man has been established.

But the greatest contribution of Stalin was his fight for the building of Socialism in one country, and his leadership in its accomplishment. This will probably rank with the revolution among the greatest social achievements in human history and his part in it cannot be exaggerated. Furthermore, as the chief administrator of the Soviet commonwealth, during the working out of its economic and social plans, Stalin has shown great powers of comprehension and his views on the questions of equality and individual responsibility are of great importance toward an understanding of the new Socialist civilization created in Russia and the new ethics it has given rise to.

THE range and diversity of interests of these Marxist thinkers has often been commented upon. In the correspondence of Marx and Engels even more than in their more formal writings, one is awed by the fertility and profundity of their minds. Their curiosity is inexhaustible and their penetration almost incredible. But what is even more extraordinary, and a quality fully shared by Lenin and Stalin is their quick comprehension of an *immediate* situation. No historian writing from the revealed data of years of research and with the adjusted perspectives of history has seen the same event as completely and realistically as these men, commenting as contemporaries.

Both these qualities, however, will seem less phenomenal when considered from this aspect. The Marxist view is a world view; its goal is internationalism; the Marxist is therefore trained to see the relation of the local event to the world event, of the particular to the general. The Marxist analysis also is a scientific process. It was not vatic foresight but sober calculation which enabled Stalin to predict in 1927 the American crisis of 1929.

A few words about the literary quality of these four writers may not be amiss. From the point of view of effects Marx is unquestionably the most brilliant writer. A rich deposit of epigrammatic passages could easily be skimmed from his pages. At times, however, he tends to be too allusive, and is difficult to follow. Engels is plainer and clearer but unfailingly vigorous and alive. I found him the most readable of all. Lenin is spare and direct in his writing, factual and decisive. Stalin is more colorful and his skillful use of the question and answer method of developing his points reveal his mastery of dialect. All are masters of invective arising from the powerful wrath of men ready to overturn the world to redress the injustices of centuries. There is strong feeling throughout in their writing. The accents are not the tame, formal ones of the study; the accents are those of men straining at the greatest, the most perilous tasks ever undertaken.

Whether Mr. Burns has made the best selection I am not a wide and intent enough reader of the Marxist literature to decide. From his introduction and the succinct and informative prefatory notes he has supplied with each of the selections, I feel confident that he has made as good a selection as any one man could be trusted to make. At any rate he has made conveniently available, in one volume, a considerable portion of the most important literature of our time.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Brief Review

THE LAST OF FREE AFRICA, Second Edition, Gordon MacCreagh. (D. Appleton-Century Company. $4.) In 1927 Gordon MacCreagh went to Ethiopia on a hunting trip. He returned and wrote a book which created hardly a ripple of interest. It has been re-issued to cash in on current curiosity aroused by the Italo-Ethiopian crisis. Contrary to most big-game hunters and explorers, Mr. MacCreagh does not paint his exploits in an heroic light; he strives for effect by belittling his own experiences, but he says nothing that is beyond mere routine. Those who want to get a superficial knowledge of Ethiopian customs and manners from a racily written source will find the book interesting enough.

FROM RED SEA TO BLUE NILE: A Thousand Miles of Ethiopia, by Rosita Forbes. Illustrated. (Lee Furman, Inc. $3.50). This book was first published in 1925. It is now republished with a new subtitle and a preface which, in the months since it was written, is already outdated and disproved. The text is slightly better-than-average travel writing, filled with the customary adventures, hardships, notations of the picturesque and superficial generalizations on a "primitive" land and people. The preface is a cautious one; it notes that the slave trade so solemnly denounced by the greater slave dealers of imperialism, is impossible without its Italian partners in Eritrea. It makes much of the difficulties the land would oppose to the Italian advance, but belittles the Ethiopians who are characterized as "Druses without faith, Riffs without rifles or marksmanship, Boers without strategy, Senussi without knowledge of the country." These pronouncements written a few months ago have already been disproved.

BURNERS OF MEN, by Marcel Griaule. Translated by Edward Gile Rich. Illustrated. (J. B. Lippincott Co. $2.50.) The book, subtitled "extraordinary adventures in Ethiopia," was awarded the Gringoire Prize for 1935. One episode, an execution by burning, similar to the much more frequent lynchings in the U. S., furnishes the excuse for the title. The author, a French scientist with literary ambitions, tells an ordinary traveler's story with its caravan hardships, etc., in bad Proust mixed with bad Paul Morand—at least in translation.

LAWLESS JUDGES, by Louis P. Goldberg and Eleanore Leenson with an introduction by Prof. Morris R. Cohen. (The Rand School Press. $2.50.) *Lawless Judges* is somewhat of an anthology of the *causes célebres* of American labor. It reveals the "lawless" disregard of the existing laws by the presiding bourgeois judge in the Centralia, Sacco-Vanzetti, Haymarket and other trials where workers were the defendants.

Grouped together, as in this book, these trials stand as an epic indictment of the American judiciary.

> For the most part, [say the authors] they [the judges] have been members of the propertied class and their open sympathy with the employer makes it difficult for them to credit the innocence of the worker.

However, where they offer solutions the authors fail. As an immediate cure for judicial bias against the lower classes, they suggest the recall of judges and more stringent impeachment laws. But if, as they admit, the class antipathy of the judges is responsible for labor repressing decisions, how can a legislature or judicial commission be expected to penalize its own representatives? It must be obvious that if labor is to get justice in the courtroom, it will only occur when the man who sits in judgment has a proletarian background or is sympathetic to the cause of the worker. No political party, except that of

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the workers and farmers themselves, will ever place such a man on the bench.

JOSEPH CONRAD AND HIS CIRCLE, by Jessie Conrad. (E. P. Dutton & Co. $3.75.) It is extraordinary that a book of 279 pages could manage to throw so little light on its subject. It makes clear that Joseph Conrad was an uncommonly difficult husband and gives the impression that Jessie Conrad was not precisely an ideal wife for a man of letters, but otherwise it tells us nothing whatsoever. Mrs. Conrad does say that her husband was "a gentleman in every sense of the word," if that is of interest to anyone.

Montaigne

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE, by Marvin Lowenthal. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1935. 394 *pages.* $3.50.

THE original text of the *Essays* is difficult reading; in this book, the most interesting passages are skilfully woven into an "autobiography," which opens Montaigne to a larger public than before. To have done this—and done it so well—is a great merit, for it is highly instructive to have first-hand knowledge of this "first modern man" who instead of remaining a passive member of the medieval community wanted to achieve an individual interpretation of life, death, love and all human fate by continually "essaying" his human essence. The whole process of erosion of an old civilization by a new one is reflected in Montaigne and his writings are full of so much charm that one almost forgets how absurd it would be to be "Montaigne-ians" today. For this great dissolver was not without limitations. He looked for himself and it was in himself that he wanted to discover the supreme certitudes. He found only the famous "Que sais-je?" The whole tragedy of modern individualism is already there.

While Montaigne was *thinking* his time, other men—the condotierri, the statesmen, the reformers—were *making* it and after all, their lives were more interesting. Amidst the storms of his time, his existence was peaceful; there were few loves in it and they were purely sensual; his pleasures were mediocre: good wine, privacy, books, a few friends. There was the worm of solitude which he could fight only by his books. He had no other way of surmounting it: his epoch was precisely the epoch that created and deepened the solitude of the modern man, by the extension of competitive economy and by the almost complete destruction of patriarchal values. NORBERT GUTERMAN.

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That's Their Story

PRESIDENT ROBINSON of C.C.N.Y. made a few friends with that famous umbrella of his. They are, from right to right, William Randolph Hearst, Father James M. Gillis and Dr. Irving N. Rattner. Dr. Rattner, past commander of the City College Post of the American Legion, calls the alumni report on Robinson the result of "the fiendish, unsportsmanlike activities of the radical agitators." Dr. Gillis frankly blames the report on black magic, on the "dangerous spell" that the Communists have cast over those with whom they have come in contact. Dr. Hearst praises the "great work" that the Robinsonian umbrella has wrought at C.C.N.Y., and intimates that "every good and loyal citizen" should subscribe to a fund to buy President Robinson two umbrellas.

Hearst continues his pro-Mussolini campaign in his secretly-owned New York Mirror. "Do you think Mussolini's rule," an editorial asks, "would be worse for these primitive tribesmen than the slave-raiding rule of Haile Selassie and his gangs of Arab slave traders?" If you're asking us, Mr. Hearst, yes.

Walter Lippmann now emerges as the principal practitioner of the psychological method of historical interpretation. What is wrong with Smith, he asserts, is that he quarreled with Roosevelt, and what is wrong with Roosevelt is that he quarreled with Smith. You may not believe it, but here are Lippmann's words: "These two men have not become divided because Roosevelt has recently taken to rousing the masses against the rich and Smith has taken to declamation about Communism and the Red flag. On the contrary, it is because they have become divided and have taken divergent paths that each has ended by making his destructive and unworthy appeal to popular passion. . . . It need not have happened if only the two men had had the capacity of mind and heart to realize that their destinies were inextricably interwoven, that each possessed qualities that supplemented and corrected the other's weaknesses." But, alas, the course of true love did not run smooth and Mr. Lippmann has that sad feeling that must come to every romantic who contemplates an unhappy ending.

"As if President Woodrow Wilson," says Dr. Bemis of Yale, "any more than President Franklin D. Roosevelt, could have been dragged anywhere by bankers!" Dr. Bemis doesn't understand; you don't have to drag 'em.

A lot of people seem to me to be careless about the language they use. For instance, The New York Times says in an advertisement, "The New York Times Book Review . . . makes an outstanding contribution to contemporary literary criticism in its unbiased, enlightening appraisals of new books."

Even Governor Bibb Graves of Alabama doesn't seem quite precise enough in his choice of adjectives. In congratulating Sheriff Sandlin for shooting Ozie Powell, Graves spoke of the sheriff's doing his "full duty." That, from the governor's point of view, seems an extravagant statement; after all, Powell didn't die instantly.

While The Post refers to the confidential government reports on the silicosis deaths at Gauley Bridge —reports read into the record by Congressman Marcantonio—The Times can find no evidence for the charges except "gossip and an article published in a midwestern radical weekly." This is why The Times is considered a great impartial newspaper.

The Wall Street Journal knows better than to fill its readers with lies about the Soviet Union. Its latest Moscow letter describes the tremendous gains made in gold production and, though the writer regards Serebrovksy's pledge to produce more gold in 1936 than any other country as a bold one, he obviously has a painful suspicion that it will be fulfilled. It's all right for Hearst readers to be lied to, but the Wall Street boys have to know.

An Oklahoma teacher has lost his job because he instructed children about "the love life of frogs," which the parents said was "far too advanced for the pupils." What if he had chosen whales?

The Legion of Rockford, Illinois, is upset about a mural painted on a high-school wall by Herbert Rosengren, C.W.A. artist. The mural shows workers, which Legion officials say is Communistic. Mr. Rosengren is apparently quite an artist, if one can judge from the tribute paid him by the superintendent of schools. "I agree with the Legion that the picture is a peculiar painting, a very peculiar painting," the superintendent said. "It makes one get riled up and stirred up. I didn't look at it very long for sometimes it is too dangerous to look at some paintings too long." An artist who can stir up a superintendent of schools ought to be able to go places.

Mrs. Mabel Eaton was denied custody of her children by Advisor Master Grosman in Newark chancery court. Question: Is a man who thinks a woman can be "thoroughly imbued," at one and the same time, with "Communistic and I.W.W. doctrines," fit to pronounce on divorce or anything else?

Among recent pastors to contribute texts for the editorial page of the New York American is Dan Poling, president of Christian Endeavor and leading exponent of muscular Christianity. Poling's text is, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid." And the American's humorous makeup man puts it over an editorial advocating preparedness.

Highest poetic level of the week reached in Wall Street Journal. Author Victor Jarret writes "The Dynasty." Whole poem deserves quotation, but get this:

"So, in the event of time, a son was born to Edward VII,
Elected by God and not seniority to reign,
Vested with a crown which would have tottered many men,
Endowed by birth and not by choice to attain."

After singing the praises of George V, Author Jarret concludes:

"Edward, the world expects a great deal from your hand;
Doing and alertness is in your make-up to give;
Whatever Britain needs for its happiness.
Arise, your Britannic Majesty, and let not sway
Radicals and Communists to run your country hapless,
Dampen your ardor, and lead the world astray.
Edward, the plaudits of your subjects and the world's nations
Invoke within you the meaning of right and wrong
Granted by the Grace of God, and needs no explanation,
Hitherto understood and carried on by the strong.
The King is dead, long live the King, Sire;
Hallowed be His work for the Britannic Empire."

Glad to see that Soviet Russia Today is publishing serially Avdeyenko's *I Love*, one of the best and most neglected Soviet novels.

O. O. McIntyre, N.Y. American columnist, does his duty. "Clearest editorials," he notes in a list of superlatives, "those by W. R. Hearst." Your salary, Mr. McIntyre, will be raised tomorrow; we need men of your discernment.

MARGARET WRIGHT MATHER.

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The Theater

"Paradise Lost": An Obituary

THE endless discussions about Chekhov's influence in Odets' *Paradise Lost* make one recall a well-known remark of Johannes Brahms. When one of his admirers scolded him with the discovery: "But your finale sounds very much like Beethoven," Brahms replied: "Well, any damn fool knows that!" Substantially the same reply might be made to the critics and criticasters who believe they have said everything about *Paradise Lost* once they announced its affinity to Chekhov. Criticism of the play does not end with this discovery; actually it can only begin here. For the question is not *Has Odets borrowed from Chekhov?* but *Can this method be successfully applied* to the Odets subject-matter?

Now if *Paradise Lost* were just another play which pleased some and bored others there would be no excuse to reopen the discussion. But it ignited controversy from the first and now as it nears its close controversy still crackles. There has never been a question of Odets' talents or intention; everyone has granted the depth of the one and the importance of the other. But even those who profoundly admire the texture of the writing —and I am one of these—find themselves apologizing for the play's structure. Even Robert Forsythe, whose sympathetic appreciation appeared in these columns, admitted this difficulty although he dismissed it by chiding people "who are never content unless every piece of the dramatic pattern fits into place." Denial of the difficulties, however, does not remove their existence. Nor does it unravel the elaborate pros and cons that have wrapped the play in critical chaos. While we can all agree that perfectionism is a sterile ideal, there is no reason for making a virtue of its opposite. This is particularly relevant to a left-wing writer like Odets and a social play like *Paradise Lost* since it is on its structure that drama stands or falls as a message.

There is nothing startling, of course, in the mere fact that *Paradise Lost* is reminiscent of Chekhov. Frequently subject-matter compels several writers to use a similar method. But is this the case with Odets and Chekhov? Does the form of *The Cherry Orchard,* for example, apply to *Paradise Lost?* In other words, is there a sound analogy between the substances of the two plays?

When we see the characters in *The Cherry Orchard* wandering around the stage in weak and hopeless bewilderment there is never any question as to their sickness. They are recognizable symbols of the bourgeois aristocracy of pre-revolutionary Russia—members of a class that is dying and semi-conscious of the incurable disease eating its blood. These people are both convincing as individuals and accurate as symbols. When the conclusion has stranded them one stage nearer their class-doom there is no impression of an unresolved plot. Nothing very startling has happened, but the action has been satisfying. The "pieces of the dramatic pattern fit into place," the fate of the group has been engraved on our minds.

When we see the characters in *Paradise Lost* wandering around the stage in weak and hopeless bewilderment we accept them as real people, profoundly sad and suffering individuals whose lives have been mutilated almost beyond belief. Sam Katz steals from his partner, is sexually impotent. His wife broods ceaselessly on her barrenness. And within the Gordon family: bank-clerk Julie is dying of sleeping sickness; former athlete Ben, suffering from heart disease, is finally shot as a thug; musician Pearl is a loveless neurotic. Gus, friend of the family, is a high-grade moron; his daughter cuckolds her husband Ben, in partnership with Kewpie, a taxi-driver whose business is racketeering. And there is Pike, the furnace man, whose Wobbly protest is a continuous lost cry; two ragged unemployed who enter for a moment of cynicism; an ineffectual shop delegation. Finally, the matter-of-fact Clara Gordon, and her husband Leo, a liberal small manufacturer whose essential integrity is confused between dream and reality, whose final material losses free him to embrace a vision of a glorious tomorrow. . . .

We are told that these are not simply people but representations of a social group. If nothing had been said of such a symbolic meaning the play could have been accepted as a picture of a single unfortunate household. We would have felt that the writer had stacked the cards to crowd his play with terror. But we are told by the director, Harold Clurman, that the theme is "the decay of the middle class" in America today. Unquestionably it is a picture of decay taken in the literal sense; but does this word apply to our middle class? Is it decaying in the sense that the bourgeois aristocracy of *The Cherry Orchard* was decaying?

Our middle class is not in decay; it is not a homogeneous group withering into oblivion. The economic base of the middle class has cracked apart and this cracking has resulted in a crisis: there is fierce conflict now between its two main constituent groups. On the one hand there are the dependent salaried employes, the independent enterprisers and high-salaried employes on the other. The first, an overwhelming majority, is being stampeded into the camp of the proletariat whose economic interests it unwittingly shares. The second clings to the big bourgeoisie on whom its survival rests.

The action of this composite but disunited middle class, therefore, has nothing to do with decay; its body is not wasting away because of a cancer sucking its strength. Its body is being torn in opposite directions; it is desperately struggling to survive. Overwhelming numbers of middle-class people will be compelled to learn, despite their present wishes, that the solution of their economic, social and political problems depends on an alliance with the proletariat—into whose ranks they bring an infusion of enormous power for a common struggle. They are therefore part and parcel of the advancing social group: of the flooding strength which creates the new social order. Can their life be truthfully conveyed by such symbols as sexual impotence, heart disease, sleeping sickness, barrenness and arson, larceny, racketeering, cuckoldry, feeblemindedness, sex neurosis? It is regrettable to see a left writer, proceeding on an utterly false premise, portray as doomed objects of decay that very middle class which will be enlisted as a vigorous ally in the growing People's Front against fascism and war.

The middle class in *Paradise Lost* suffers from an abject incurable disease from which there is no return. Because of this, the final vision of a new social order is something tacked onto a structure where it does not belong, from which it has not organically developed. When Gordon declaims the final fuzzy peroration his wife stands with benign approval—and with utter unreality (she has consistently greeted his verbal visions with "I married a fool!"). As for the rest of the characters, their configuration is manifestly far from a true symbolism of their class. The "pieces" do not fit together because the pattern is false. Dr. Krutch has blamed the structural collapse of *Paradise Lost* on Marxism, but the very opposite is the case. It is the lack of Marxism which has deprived the play of its fundamental social truth.

And yet there is not a current production whose texture has the excitement or vitality of many of the separate scenes of *Paradise Lost.* Odets created some of his characters with such intensity that the dialog is a series of electric shocks. Even the "dramatic opportunism" (anything-for-a-laugh method) which canceled the emotional force of moments in *Waiting for Lefty* is successfully transformed here. The pathos is deepened by laughter. The stunning power and richness of the writing would seem to account for the high praise which the play has received from so many writers, for its texture is as splendid as its structure is dismaying.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

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The Screen

Artists in Last Year's Uniforms

THE MOVIE department, according to long-standing orders from Moscow, is to concern itself from time to time with the movies, and with that ukase in mind this underpaid, undercover agent went out last night and saw a movie, then came home and spent the rest of the evening boning up on the pictures in general by reading a book called *The Movies on Trial.*

The picture, *Professional Soldier,* was a dreary little fun-maker that will be given a carload of stars by the reviewers of Liberty Magazine, and be completely forgotten by the end of next week. At least, I hope so. It is the traditional Graustark stuff with a Richard Harding Davis hero, all of it old as the hills—hills from which I should think (wrongly, no doubt) every ounce of gold had long ago been extracted. There is nothing new in the film except the Eton accent of Freddie Bartholomew, an accent that justly stirs the most chauvinistic impulses, and if Freddie Bartholomew, groomed as the Shirley Temple Opposition, should really sweep the country it will be regarded as a national calamity. But a lot of this Balkan-Kingdom drivel has been really entertaining, and what marred the current offering was its jingo overtones. Nobody wants to be hyper-sensitive and shout "subversive propaganda!" every time a swashbuckling soldier-of-fortune goes for his shooting irons, but when the strains of the official U. S. Marine march are blared across the action every five minutes, the whole thing ceases to be innocent mayhem and becomes instead the old, crude, familiar, phony flag-waving.

You may be interested, if you ever see this film, by one particular shot in it. When the usual revolutionaries make the conventional proposition to the customary adventurer, they state: "We are not Bolsheviks, Communists or Nazis—we are just patriots." No fooling, Twentieth Century Pictures, do you really mean it? And one would think, if there is absolutely no limit to the way they can scramble their labels, that sometime, somewhere, somehow they would turn out a less banal combination. How about "We are not patriots or purse-snatchers — just ordinary Young Pioneers," or "We are neither Communists nor Knickerbocker Democrats—just simple stuffed shirts," etc., write your own. The movie shot was reminiscent of the business of taking out citizenship papers. When you go over to the Federal Building to help citizenize a pal a solemn-looking guy yawning behind a high bench blasts, at a single breath, the following question into him: "Yousolemnlynswearyoudo" (Or do not? Probably do not) "believeinpologamypolyandrybolshevism communismoranarchy?" This, Twentieth Century Pictures, is a *real* combination.

As for *The Movies On Trial,* a symposium that includes about twenty contributors —there is nothing in the book, except for two or three out-of-the-way items, that you haven't heard a hundred times over, and if there is ever a final verdict on the movies it's unlikely this contribution will influence it. Not that what most of the writers say is irrelevant or untrue, because it isn't. But all of the evidence they present against Hollywood has been presented before and so have most of their suggested remedies, remedies that (as many of their sponsors admit) will never add up to anything but zero. Reading this book, which is full of hearty damns for Hollywood's box-office standard but practically bare of any reference to the class line-up on which it re s, is like reading a lot of last year's newspaper editorials.

> . . . the motion-picture industry has degenerated into the mere demoralizing depicturization of debased events

states Congressman Raymond J. Cannon, with no originality but swell alliteration and, according to Judge Ben B. Lindsey,

> The movies are going to do more than any other agency to prevent the greatest of all crimes, horrid war. Through motion pictures, all nations, peoples, races and creeds, all speaking the same language of the movies, are being brought into concord, acquaintanceship and understanding.

We hope you're right, Judge, but the evidence is just about a hundred percent the other way. And "Either Hollywood lacks great artists or the artists are prostituting their powers to the wrong purposes," comments Sydney E. Goldstein. Either that, or there's something wrong with the system.

1ST OF THE THEATRE UNION SUNDAY NIGHTS

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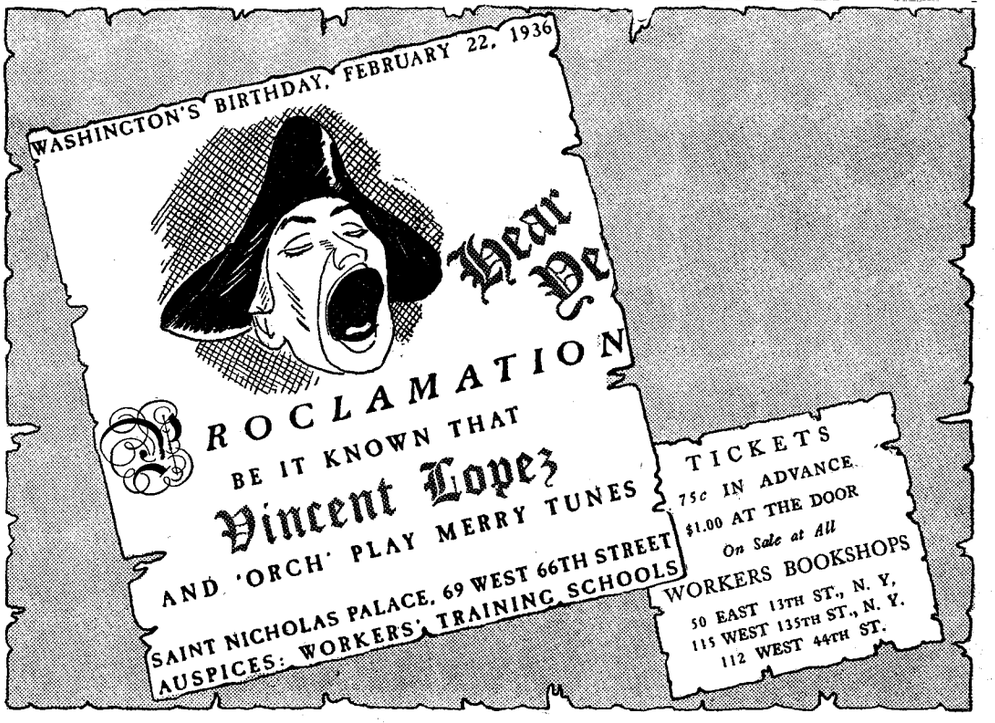

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The effort to cram for the movies with this volume was a great mistake and resulted in dizziness with sinking sensations, symptoms alm[illegible]lentical with celluloid poisoning. And [illegible]uloid poisoning, in case you have it bu[illegible]u've never heard of it before, is the very prevalent ailment contracted by walking into the movies too often at the wrong time. Whoever has settled into his seat with the lovers' fade-out, just in time to learn it was Bill Baxter who committed all those horrible murders, then watched the whole drama build itself up through the Silly Symphonies, nature shorts and Coming Attractions to a powerful climax that shows Bill Baxter addressing a roomful of suspects ("Yes, ladies and gentlemen, one of us is the killer and the question is who? Who?")—knows the feeling, has been exposed to the disease and probably has it in its final stages.

The truth about the pictures at this particular time is that none of the new films are really outstanding. Two that are shortly coming up, however, are certain to create extraordinary interest. Even though the *Life of Pasteur* and Chaplin's *Modern Times* turn out to be not quite as good as the raves about them will indicate, they are sure to be far above current productions.

KENNETH FEARING.

Between Ourselves

NEXT Wednesday, Feb. 12, the Friends of THE NEW MASSES will be addressed by Elizabeth Lawson, who has spent a number of years in the deep South as an organizer and labor journalist. She will speak on "Abraham Lincoln and the Negro." All NEW MASSES readers and their friends are invited to attend. There is no admission charge. Time: 8:30 P. M., Room 717a, Steinway Hall, New York, 113 West 57th Street, New York.

Corliss Lamont, a frequent contributor to THE NEW MASSES, will be the next lecturer in the "Mind of America" series of the League of American Writers. The title of the lecture is "Religion Escape or Reform." Waldo Frank will preside. The lecture will be given Monday, February 10, 8:15 p.m. at the Hotel Delano, 108 W. 43rd Street.

Friends and supporters of THE NEW MASSES who attend the International Labor Defense bazaar to be held from February 11 to 16 at Manhattan Lyceum, 66 East 4th Street, Manhattan, will be afforded a special opportunity of providing their friends and acquaintances with sample copies or trial subscriptions of THE NEW MASSES. At the I.L.D. Bazaar mailing booth, special subscription rates of $1 for three months will be accepted for mailing the magazine to any part of the United States or abroad. Single copies will be mailed at the regular retail price, 15 cents.

The painting by Eitaro Ishigaki used on page 16 of this issue is one of a group that he will exhibit in a one-man show at the A.C.A. Gallery March 16 to 20.

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